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THE LIFE OF OUR LIFE

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THE LIFE OF OUR LIFE

PART THE THIRD

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

IX.

The Preaching of the Cross

(PART I.)

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THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

PART I.

BY

HENRY JAMES COLERIDGE

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(*Ex Matthæo* c. xii.)

PREFACE.

THE present volume enters on the history of a most important period of the Life of our Lord, a period the charcteristics of which are in many respects novel. At the end of the last volume we had reached the central and turning point of the Public Life, in the Confession of our Lord's Divinity made by St. Peter, and in the promises made to the great Apostle in return for that Confession. Each of the three historical Evangelists notices that from that time our Lord began to speak openly to the Apostles about His coming Passion, as well as to preach to the people the doctrine of the Cross. But St. Matthew and St. Mark do not tell us very much of the events which occurred between the time of the Confession of St. Peter and the last journey of our Lord to Jerusalem before Palm Sunday. They give few incidents in Galilee, and the very important heads of doctrine which were delivered while He was in Peræa. The reason for this silence of the earlier Evangelists has often been stated. It lies in the fact that St. Matthew made it a rule to himself to mention nothing concerning our Lord's Public Life which occurred in Judæa and Jerusalem, until

he comes to the Passion, and that St. Mark followed him very faithfully in this abstention. The reason for this is probably to be found in the fact that St. Matthew originally put together his Gospel for the use of the Jewish Church at Jerusalem, and that on this account he omitted that part of the history which was well known to those Christians for whom he wrote.

But whether this be so or not, it is certain that the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John supply us largely with materials respecting this period of our Lord's Preaching, and that in consequence, at this point of the history, we have to depend mainly on them, except as to those portions where the scene is not to be laid in Judæa or in Jerusalem. The whole period between the Confession of St. Peter and Palm Sunday, embracing perhaps seven or eight months, is easily divided into certain large fragments. For some time our Lord remains in Galilee. It is there that He spent His time immediately after the Confession of St. Peter, that He first predicted His Passion, and taught the people of the necessity of the Cross for His followers. After a short interval, the great mystery of the Transfiguration took place. After this, and the miracle on the Lunatic Boy which immediately followed, we find our Lord returning to Capharnaum, where He pays the didrachma for Himself and St. Peter. Then follow some beautiful instructions, which appear to have been chiefly addressed

to the Apostles, about the greatness of children in the Kingdom, the immense care that is to be taken of them, the great danger and punishment of scandal, the duties of fraternal 'correption' and mutual forgiveness. These instructions show us that our Lord was at this time still mainly intent on the formation and training of His Apostles, and was able to impart to them some of the most sublime and vital doctrines, on the carrying out of which the welfare and harmony and successful progress of the Church was afterwards to depend. These teachings are related by all the three first Evangelists, though more fully by St. Matthew than by the others.

After this, the scene changes, and we find ourselves for a considerable time under the guidance of St. John. The time has now come, early in the September of the last year of our Lord's Preaching, for the celebration of the great Feast of Tabernacles, one of the three occasions on which, according to the strict Law, all the men of the nation were to be present at Jerusalem. Some of our Lord's near relations urge Him to go up to the Feast, and show Himself to the world. He declines to go up in the usual manner, but He has a secret design of His own of being present, unexpectedly, at the Feast. He goes up privately, and for nearly four chapters, according to the common arrangement, St. John is occupied in relating the disputations held by our Lord in the Temple with His enemies, the Chief

Priests. The external incidents of the time are but two—the release by our Lord of the woman taken in adultery, and His healing the man born blind.

St. John stops abruptly at the end of the last discourse of this time which he relates, and proceeds on at once, towards the end of his tenth chapter, to tell us of another visit of our Lord to Jerusalem in the depth of winter, for the Feast of the Dedication. For it is his plan to confine himself, in this part of his work, to incidents which occurred either in Jerusalem itself, or in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. St. Luke had already taken up, as his work, the narrative of what passed, during these last few months of our Lord's teaching, in Judæa itself, leaving alone the incidents in or near Jerusalem before the Passion. These two Evangelists thus complete each the other. In fact, St. John's chapters might simply be inserted, in two or three large fragments, into the narrative of St. Luke.

What St. Luke has as his special office to relate to us about this period is certainly most important. When our Lord was charged by the Chief Priests with sedition before Pilate, they said that 'He stirred up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee unto this place.'[1] When, not very long after the first day of Pentecost, St. Peter admitted Cornelius and his companions, as the first Gentiles, into the Christian Church, he is said to have gone to Joppa, where the messengers

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 5.

of Cornelius found him, on a kind of general tour of visitation of Christian communities already existing in Judæa, properly so-called. When the Apostle has to speak to Cornelius and his friends, he says to them, 'You know the word which hath been published through all Judæa, for it began from Galilee, after the Baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.'[2] These are words spoken at the very time of the Passion by our Lord's enemies, or soon after the first beginnings of the Church by the chief Apostle. They must prove beyond all doubt that there had been a general and most successful preaching by our Lord Himself in the province of Judæa, as distinguished from Galilee, Samaria, or Peræa, of which there is not a word said in the two earlier Gospels.

It is to the instructions and the incidents which belong to this Judæan preaching of our Lord that St. Luke devotes that large portion of his Gospel which begins at chapter x. verse 17, and ends at chapter xviii. verse 14. In relating these, St. Luke is entirely alone, although in certain passages he has to introduce anecdotes which are nearly identical in their details with similar anecdotes which had before occurred in Galilee, and, although, in the same way, he has often to relate instructions of

[2] Acts x. 37, 38.

our Lord which are repetitions, with some slight variations, of similar instructions belonging to the Galilæan preaching. This course of teaching on the part of our Lord seems to have been closed just at the time of the Feast of the Dedication, already mentioned. Here St. John comes in again. He supplies us with the account of this short visit to the Holy City, and then tells us of our Lord's retirement beyond the Jordan, from which He seems to have been summoned by the sisters of Lazarus, on account of the dangerous illness of their brother. Then the same Evangelist gives us the history of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, of its effect on the Jewish rulers, and of our Lord's second retirement to a 'city called Ephrem,' in order to avoid the malice of His enemies. After this, St. John passes immediately to the preparation for the last Pasch.

There is yet another most important department of the history which has to be assigned to the period now before us. This is the teaching of our Lord, related by all the three first Evangelists, in Peræa, the country beyond the Jordan, which was now the only part of the Holy Land where He had not preached, except the Samaritan districts. If we suppose the raising of Lazarus to have taken place soon after the retirement of our Lord, which was occasioned by the hostility manifested to Him at Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, the time which would remain between that great miracle and Palm Sunday

may be naturally assigned to this preaching in Peræa. Our Lord's teaching here would have been similar to that of His former ministries in Galilee and in Judæa, when He spoke to the people in general. Thus the three first Evangelists do not give any account of this teaching, St. Matthew and St. Mark because they have spoken of the teaching in Galilee, St. Luke because he has spoken of the teaching in Judæa. All three, however, give us at this point some teaching which seems now to have been imparted by our Lord for the first time. This teaching relates in the main to the Counsels of Perfection, and the special reward of the close following of our Lord. It is thus very natural that it should have been reserved by Him for this the last period of His mihistry. From this the Evangelists naturally pass to the last ascent to Jerusalem before the Passion itself.

The present volume deals with the earlier portions of the period, as they have been sketched in the foregoing paragraphs. The greatest mystery with which it treats is that of the Transfiguration, in which the manifestations and promises made at the Baptism were so marvellously repeated. The historical incident of greatest importance which is here spoken of at length, is that presence of our Lord at the feast of Tabernacles, which is so fully related for us by St. John. It requires much study to catch the supreme importance in the history of what passed during those few days, and I do not fear

that any intelligent reader will consider that too much space has been allotted to these marvellous chapters of the Fourth Gospel. It would have been natural to close the volume with the close of St. John's account. But it is desirable not to multiply unnecessarily the separate portions of the work, and I have therefore included in the present volume some part of the great Judæan preaching which is related by St. Luke. But it is better to defer to the next volume what may be said as to the characteristics of this part of the teaching and preaching of our Lord, which, while it has so many features in common with the Galilæan preaching, has yet a distinguishing character of its own. It is well known how often our Lord's words and discourses as related here by St. Luke, show that He was speaking in a country like Judæa, and not like Galilee. It is also true that there is much evidence, internal in the teaching itself, which bears witness that it was delivered at a comparatively late period of His Public Life. But on this subject it will be more natural to speak when we come, if God so wills, to the next volume.

H. J. C.

Torquay,
September 19, 1886,
Feast of the Dolours of our Blessed Lady.

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⁂ *The Story of the Gospels*, to which reference is made in this volume, instead of to the *Vita Vitæ Nostræ*, is the English version of the Harmony of the Gospels which, in the last named work, is given in Latin. The *Vita Vitæ Nostræ* is at present out of print, and the change has been made for the convenience of readers.

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CHAPTER I.

First Prediction of the Passion.

St. Matt. xvi. 21—23; St. Mark viii. 31—33; St. Luke ix. 21;
Story of the Gospels, § 82.

THE three historical Evangelists all tell us that, immediately after the great confession of faith in the Divinity of our Lord made by St. Peter, He began to teach His disciples about the approaching Passion which He was to undergo at Jerusalem. St. Luke connects this prediction of our Lord with the precept given by Him at the same time to the Apostles, that they were not to make it known to any that He was the Son of God. Something has been said, at the close of the last volume of this work, concerning the reasons which may be assigned for the prohibition in this connection. Among other things, it might certainly have been a cause of scandal to many, that One Who had been declared to be a Divine Person should suffer the ignominy of the Cross. The prohibition did not extend to the revelation, now made for the first time to the disciples, that the Passion was to be. The manner and form of the prediction are in themselves remarkable. For our Lord was to make many predictions of this mystery, and we shall see that they increase in definiteness and particularity as the series advances. In this case He makes no mention of the Cross as such, nor does He allude to the Gentiles as having any

part in the infliction of the Passion, nor does He mention its details, nor that it was to be brought about by means of treachery. On the other hand, He especially mentions the part borne in it by the Chief Priests, and also that the Passion was to be followed by the Resurrection on the third day.

'From that time Jesus began to teach them, to show to His disciples that He, the Son of Man, must go to Jerusalem, and must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and the Chief Priests and Scribes, and be put to death, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spoke the word openly.' It may be thought that the disciples themselves had not been fit to receive the revelation of the future Passion, until they had been first firmly grounded in the belief of the Divinity of our Lord. This is not contrary to what has just been said, that the Passion would perhaps be an occasion of scandal to those who had been taught that our Lord was the Incarnate Son of God. The Passion could not and cannot be understood without the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Cross for the sins of the whole world, the necessity of that Sacrifice, in the decrees of God, if those sins were to be pardoned, the full and complete satisfaction to the justice of God thereby wrought, and the perfect redemption in every respect which is its effect and fruit. Without this doctrine our Lord is simply a victim of the malice of His enemies, as Socrates might be thought to have been. Or, at the best, He is the perfect pattern of patience and all other most heavenly virtues, in the sufferings which He underwent. Without this doctrine, the death of the Messias would only be His defeat and the extinction of the Kingdom He came to found. With it, the Passion is His great triumph, the victory

over all His foes, the sure foundation of His Kingdom. The disciples might now be capable of understanding this necessity, and these effects of the Passion, which are founded on the truth of the Divinity of the Person Who was to suffer. Thus it would have been less convenient to reveal this to them before they had grasped, by the teaching of the Father, this fundamental truth relating to His Person, which could but heighten their ideas of the wonderfulness of the mystery they were now called on to receive, and at the same time would enable them to see the Divine purpose thereof.

The doctrine of the Passion, therefore, might be considered as a difficulty only to those who might have an imperfect conception of the office and mission of the Son of God. But to those who could understand these rightly, it was not a difficulty, but rather the completion and crown of the Divine counsel of the Incarnation. This seems also to be the doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures, of which our Lord spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. For He reproached them as 'foolish and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets had spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?'[1] These words show that the right intelligence of the Prophets would have shown the disciples that the Passion was to be expected by those who knew the Scriptures. The words 'ought not,' and the rest, may be considered in two ways. They may be considered as signifying the kind of necessity which required that what had been so constantly predicted from the first, in so many different ways, must of right be brought about, as when our Lord told the

[1] St. Luke xxiv. 25.

disciples in the Garden that He might have twelve legions of angels to defend Him if He asked, but how in that case would the Scriptures be fulfilled? Or the words may refer to the requirements of what was congruous and becoming, even apart from the prophecies and other anticipations of the Passion, such as those contained in the law of sacrifice which had been in force from the beginning of the world. Thus St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, who knew the Old Law, says, 'It became Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, Who had brought many children to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect by suffering.'[2] In these last words the doctrine of the Sacrifice is contained, for the words used for 'making perfect' is the sacrificial word which means consecration or immolation. And the Apostle goes on in that place to argue that the Saviour of the human race must be like those whom he calls 'the children' in all things, even in death. Thus we have another reason for the Passion suggested. It was not only requisite for the satisfaction that was due to the justice of God in the first place, and for the perfect consummation and immolation of the Saviour Himself, in the second place, but also, in the third place, for the children who were to reap the fruits of the salvation wrought by the Redeemer, that they might have nothing to suffer which He had not passed through, and in which they might not find in Him a perfect example and most powerful helper. These reasons would make it desirable that the Apostles should now at once be enlightened as to the manner in which the mission of the Son of God was to be accomplished, by His suffering many things and being put to death at Jerusalem.

[2] Heb. ii. 10.

But the most loving and tender heart of Peter could not bear this revelation of suffering and outward defeat, ending in death, in the case of the Lord to Whom he was so devoted, and he allowed himself to act merely on his human love, which prompted him to wish there should be no such terrible ending to the work which His Master had in hand. He took our Lord aside, as it seems, availing himself of the great familiarity which was allowed him, to remonstrate with Him. 'And Peter taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying, Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee!' He did not understand that our Lord was speaking as the great High Priest of our salvation, and that his own words amounted to nothing less than an attempt to persuade Him to renounce the very essence of the work which He came to do, to give His life a ransom for many. Our Lord always spoke of His Passion as the great desire of His Heart, and now that He had for the first time mentioned it openly to any but His Blessed Mother, His chief Apostle comes forward with words of human compassion and tenderness, the object of which was to dissuade Him from the accomplishment of this most cherished object of desire. His words, as they are translated for us, represent rather the sense than the literal signification of the original Greek. The expression is in truth a short prayer: 'God avert it from thee! God forfend!' with the name of God omitted. The words seem to show that St. Peter was altogether taken by surprise by what our Lord had said. It represented to him a prospect of suffering for which he was not in any way prepared, suffering, not so much for himself, as for his beloved Master. He had not yet learnt to understand that in the decree of the Incarnation of

the Son of God was included that of the sacrifice of the life of the Redeemer for the atonement to the justice of God for the sins of the world. Thus his natural feeling of intense devotion to our Lord's Person was not checked by any knowledge of the necessity of such an atonement for the execution of the great counsel of God's mercy for mankind. He could not see the glory to God and to our Lord, the infinite blessings to men, which were to be purchased by that sacrifice of His life of which our Lord spoke. St. Mark tells us that our Lord turned round and looked on His disciples, who were therefore not far off and who were able to hear what passed. This seems meant to show us that the thought of His disciples and the fact of their presence were a determining cause of the rebuke which He immediately administered to their chief, or at least of the manner in which it was administered, that is, in very strong and severe words indeed.

'Who, turning about and seeing His disciples, threatened Peter, saying, Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things which are of God, but the things that are of men.' The words addressed to St. Peter are the same with those used by our Lord in the last of His temptations, when the devil had invited Him to pay him worship, as the condition of receiving the power over all the world. They imply that the proposal made was in each case in some way against the majesty and rights, or at least the decrees, of God. The word Satan is probably not a proper name so much as a word descriptive of any one who makes himself an adversary to God by such a proposal, for that is the natural meaning of the word, which is also used in the Old Testament simply as an adver-

sary.[3] Doubtless such suggestions as that made by St. Peter breathed in a certain sense the spirit of the great adversary of God and man, who is especially interested in hindering anything that forms part of the counsel of God for the salvation of the world.

St. Peter by this suggestion was a scandal to his Master, because he was hindering Him, as far as lay in his power, from carrying out the decree of His Father in His regard. As far as he had any influence over the Sacred Heart, he was prompting It to shrink back from the great sacrifice which was Its darling contemplation. The remonstrance presented the soft human side of the question. It was an appeal to flesh and blood, in a matter which was altogether contrary to them, a matter concerning which they and all their interests were to be set aside and trampled under foot. Moreover, it was a point as to which our Lord, in His infinite compassion and condescension for the weakness of those who were to have to walk after Him along the same path of sacrifice, was to allow Himself to feel to the utmost the human shrinkings from sacrifice of any kind which belong to our nature. He did not go to or go through His Passion without sharing the natural fear of death, the natural horror of pain and dissolution which His followers were afterwards to experience. He drank His chalice to the very dregs, and these feelings of natural repugnance which we were to have, were allowed their full force on His tender and sensitive nature. All the more, then, it seems, did He always speak with great and strong resolution, as if He were a man who has to nerve himself up to a difficult work and to the facing of a trial which

[3] 3 Kings vi. 4.

will strain his powers to the utmost, though all the time He was yearning for the Passion with a longing which can never be described.

The words about the things of God and the things of man have already been partly explained. There is no exaggeration about the language of our Lord. The fault of St. Peter was not deliberate, for he would never have wished his beloved Master not to accomplish fully the designs of God. Human affection had led him astray in the first place, and thus he desired what was in harmony with his own devoted love, without understanding the immense love of God for the Sacred Humanity, and how that love desired to crown our Lord with that highest glory and power which were to be given to Him as the reward of the Passion. Human love desires to see those whom it loves free from trial, sorrow, pain, molestation, the Cross. Divine love wishes to see them partakers of the glories of the heavenly Kingdom, and, as the condition of those glories, of the Cross by which they are to be purchased. Human love could not enter into the wonderful plans of God, for the execution of which it was requisite that the Leader of the salvation of the world should be consummated through suffering, and that from His sufferings should come forth the copious redemption of which the Psalmist had spoken, and the power and grace which were to enable feeble men like ourselves to imitate Him even in the bearing of the Cross, and, in His strength, to triumph alike over all the suggestions of the enemy, and over the innate weakness and cowardice which we inherit from our fathers.

If our Lord could have been persuaded to quail before the representation of the Cross, the whole

glory of Heaven might have been at stake for the children of men, as far as that glory was dependent on their following our Lord along the way of the Cross. It was therefore for the sake of the disciples that our Lord administered this severe rebuke to His chief Apostle, in a manner which put down at once any such attempts for the future. Our Lord, as we shall find, was constantly after this speaking to the Apostles about the coming Passion, and we are told that they did not understand Him. But they are never said, after this, to have ventured on any remonstrance against the sufferings of which He spoke. Whatever might be the thoughts in their minds concerning this coming catastrophe, it was once for all settled as the decided purpose of our Lord and His Eternal Father. Nay, in some kind of way, they seem to have prepared themselves with the thought that they also might have to suffer, as we see in the two brothers James and John, who told our Lord that they were able to drink His chalice and be baptized with His baptism, and we find St. Peter protesting, in ignorance of his own weakness, that he was ready to go with our Lord to prison and to death.

This, then, was the first step taken by our Lord towards preparing the minds of the Apostles for the Passion which was so soon to follow. The nearness of that Passion and the plainness with which it had now been predicted, gave Him, as it were, a fresh right to insist on the doctrine of which He had already given some hint, though in words which could hardly have been fully understood at the time, in the great charge which He had delivered to the Apostles when they were sent forth to preach for the first time. We must next speak of the further

declaration of the doctrine of the Cross as applied to ourselves, which followed immediately on the prediction of the Passion.

CHAPTER II.

The Doctrine of the Cross.

St. Matt. xvi. 24—28 ; St. Mark viii. 34—39 ; St. Luke ix. 23—27 ;
Story of the Gospels, § 82.

HAVING laid down most clearly the doctrine of the future Passion, and having rebuked peremptorily the remonstrance of St. Peter, our Lord went on to insist on the practical consequence of His own Passion, which entailed the doctrine of the necessity of the cross for all His true followers. He had, as has been mentioned, already said something about bearing the cross, which may perhaps have sounded strange in the ears of the disciples at the time. If it was so, we have here an instance in which our Lord allowed language which expressed the familiar and constant thoughts of His own Sacred Heart, to rise to His lips, though He was speaking to those to whom these thoughts were not yet familiar. This might well be done, since the words were soon to receive so marvellous an illumination from the history of His own Sacred Passion, which was to make the idea of bearing a cross one of the most common in the minds of Christians. There was also another fitness about the promulgation of this doctrine at this time, apart from the image in which it was conveyed. For the great profession of the faith on the part of

St. Peter, with the magnificent promises which that confession had drawn from our Lord, might possibly have led to the supposition that the profession of faith was all that was to be required. This is a falsehood which is always ready to rise up in some Christian minds, in which conviction of the truths of religion is not always accompanied by an equally vivid recognition of the rights of God's law to our obedience, and by full contrition for sin and resolution of amendment. And inasmuch as it was the rule with our Lord to enjoin nothing in which He was not to be our perfect example, it was natural that on the declaration of His own approaching Passion should follow the teaching of the necessity of the cross in our own lives.

'And calling the multitudes together with His disciples, He said to His disciples and to all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.' The words in the Greek are stronger, 'If any man wills to come after Me.' They put it on the free will of those to whom He speaks, not as a command, which He might give, but as a condition which He assigns for the following of Himself. The condition implies that there is some motive for following Him, that it is a course of life which men may desire, because they love Him, or because they recognize in Him the Teacher or Master Who has the words of Eternal Life, the King Who has a claim on the allegiance and loyalty and personal devotion of His subjects, the Leader Who has great rewards to bestow on those who take service under Him, and the like. Moreover, He values free service more than the service of slaves, which is rendered out of fear and by compulsion, and, from all His creatures on whom He

has bestowed the gift of liberty, He desires to receive free homage of that liberty. Thus all through this passage He speaks to us as to those who have to make a choice, guided by the consideration of our own interests, of what is good for our souls rightly understood, and the like, and He puts motives based on such considerations before us in the words that now follow. But He begins by making no concealment about the condition which must underlie all following of Him, the condition, namely, of taking up the cross and denying ourselves and imitating Him. This condition, as has been said, is the natural result of the doctrine of the Passion, which He has just laid down. But it is put forward as a rule enacted by His own sovereign authority, as having a right to specify the terms on which He will accept our service.

In the words which follow, our Lord mentions three things which are to be done by any who desire to come after Him. The first of these is that he must deny himself, the second that he must take up his cross, and the third is that he must follow Him, that is, imitate Him and tread in His footsteps. The only difference between the three accounts of these words, supplied to us by the Evangelists, is that St. Luke makes the meaning of the taking up the cross more definite by inserting the word daily. This implies that the bearing the cross after our Lord is not to be so much one great heroic effort, as for instance the imitation of our Lord's sufferings by the martyrs, as a continual course day after day along the path which leads to Calvary.

It seems natural to understand these points of which He speaks first as being the continual self-denial and mortification, which are involved in the

conquest of ourselves, our passions and concupiscences, our self-will, fondness for our judgments or interests, in short, the whole long battle of Christian mortification. This is, in the main, an interior struggle and battle. Secondly, the taking up the cross daily may also signify the ready and cheerful endurance of everything that comes to us from outside, whether it be in the way of the duties and burthens of our state of life or office, the sufferings which come from ill-health or the circumstances in which we find ourselves, or from the action of others, or from natural causes, or in any other way whatsoever. Each day brings with it duties, work, troubles, providences of its own, and the life of the Christian must be a continual bearing of these, in imitation of and in union with his Lord. This daily struggle is in many respects more meritorious than the other, inasmuch as there is less room for the exercise of self-will than in the process of mortification administered by ourselves, and in other ways.

After these however must come the most important and vital point of all, the following of our Lord. Without this, mortification and even endurance of the cross, might be full of perils, and wanting in merit. There have been persons who have conquered themselves to a certain extent, with a bad motive, and their self-conquest has led to pride and then to other delusions. There have been instances of suffering even severe torments in an obstinate spirit, for the maintenance of some falsehood or in rebellion against the Church, and there are even whole systems of pretended religions full of the most atrocious self-macerations, which have been compatible with great interior foulness and moral depravity. But the following of our Lord, the

adoption of His spirit of sweetness and humility, meekness and patience, of His aims and ends and motives and objects, the formation in ourselves of His character, and the devotion of ourselves with Him to the glory of God in everything, are the crown and consummation of the process of which He here speaks, as well as the only true safeguard against delusion and error in the external practices of which mention is here made. And, at the same time, these words of our Lord supply the distinguishing characteristic of Christian virtue and perfection, which consist, not only in self-conquest and patience under the cross, but in the practice of these virtues in union with Him, because He has gone before us, out of love for His Person as well as out of obedience to His Law. He is always the King Who promises rewards to the soldiers who will share His enterprise, Who not only commands them, but shows them how to fight, Who will have them with Himself in His warfare that He may have them with Him in His Eternal Kingdom.

'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it.' These words, like the foregoing, are taken from what our Lord had already said to the Apostles, when He gave them their charge before they went out to preach alone.[1] Thus they are here extended to all the faithful, as well as to those who have the special duty of preaching the Gospel. For our Lord is the Master and Owner of all our lives, and we know, as a matter of history, that He has exacted the sacrifice of life, for His sake and the Gospel's, from Christians of all classes and ages, from women and children as well as from

[1] St. Matt. x. 39.

men, from those whose years have been spent in the cares of the world and the duties of ordinary life, as well as from Apostles and the missionaries of the Gospel in the strictest sense. To all these He now proposes that service of Himself which involves the taking up of the daily cross and the following of Him, even in the Apostolic life, for this seems to be included in that following of Him of which He has just spoken. Thus all men, of whatever condition or vocation, have the call to the cross, and, it may be, in the case of any one, that God may bring home to him the opportunity of the choice, from which, more than from anything else, our nature shrinks back, the choice between confessing the Faith or the law of God and of losing life if we do confess them, or of saving our temporal life at the cost of the death of the soul, brought about by the sin of which we should be guilty if we did not make the confession even at such a cost. In this case, as has been already explained, to lose life is to save it, and to save life is to lose it.

Our Lord goes on to argue this matter, as it were, on grounds of reason and our own truest interests. 'For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and cast away or suffer the loss of himself, his own soul? or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?' The words in the Latin text might seem to include the meaning by which even the slightest injury to the soul is understood in the word loss, as if it were said that to injure our soul even by a venial sin, were too great a price in prudence to pay for the loss of the whole world. This commentary is true in itself, but the words of the original do not of necessity contain it. The comparison is between the gain of all that the world

contains and can give, and the loss of ourselves, that is, the real self which is the centre and essence of our whole life, and which is lost by sin. And the second clause of the question seems to mean that, when the soul is lost, not all the treasures of the world can avail to purchase it back. It can be redeemed by nothing but the Blood of our Lord, which has been trampled under foot when the sin has been committed. For people have sometimes been foolish enough to persuade themselves that they may commit sin under some great temptation or danger, and make up for it in some other way, by doing good or giving alms or working for the Church, while they continue in their sin and do not renounce that which they have purchased at the price of yielding to sin. Such is the case of those who compromise with heresy or schism, declining to confess the Catholic doctrine or to abide by the Catholic Unity, and seeking to make up for their disloyalty by great exertions in good works and great services to religion. Our Lord says that nothing of the kind can avail, for the Precious Blood, which is the only cause of redemption, can never be applied, except on the condition of the sincere abandonment of that very sin for the sake of which the soul has been done to death.

He goes on still further, putting the matter on another ground, that of the shame that has been cast on Himself by any abandonment of His truth or law before the world. He makes a perfect antithesis and comparison between what sinners in this way inflict on Him, and what they will have to suffer in the same way at the Day of Judgment. They will have been ashamed of Him and His words before the face of the world, and for the fear of the

world, and in return He will be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels. 'For he that is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He shall come in His glory and in that of His Father and of the holy Angels. For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His Angels, and then will He render to every man according to His works.'

Our Lord puts the cause of the sinners of whom He is speaking with great gentleness, when He says that they are ashamed of Him and of His words. But at the same time the very gentleness of the language involves a most severe reproach, because He does not speak of their having very much to suffer, beyond the braving of the ridicule and dishonour of the world, while at the same time He implies all the considerations which might have weighed with them on the side of courage and loyalty, such as their great obligations to Him, the love which His Person ought to have inspired, the degree to which He was exposing Himself to shame and dishonour for their sakes, as well as the hopes He held out to them of great rewards, if they proved themselves worthy to bear His Name. He speaks of the world for the fear of which they would let their weakness overpower their duty and loyalty, as a sinful and adulterous generation, words which applied even in their literal sense to the generation to which He Himself preached, as we learn from many hints in the Gospel History, but which may bear the metaphorical sense which they have in some places of Scripture, in which those who forsake God are said to be adulterers, because He is

in truth the one Spouse of the soul, and to admit any love or devotion but His is a sinful and adulterous act. In opposition to these He puts the glorious Angels who shall accompany Him when He comes at the Last Day, full of joy and honour and love for those who shall have confessed Him before men, and who as being so powerful, so high in the Kingdom of God, so full of true wisdom and intelligence, and so ready to give honour where it is due, are abundantly sufficient to counterbalance the puny and passing opinions of the world.

Our Lord seems especially to mention His glory and the glory of the Father and of the Angels, as a set-off to the ignominy which has been heaped on Him in His mortal life, which those who are ashamed of Him have not had the courage to share. For it will be what St. Paul calls the reproach of the Cross which makes the confession of our Lord precious and meritorious, and which at the same time will occasion the fall of those who will not confess Him. For there would be no merit at all in confessing Him, if all men saw His glory. The shame is passing and the glory, besides being in itself so great, is eternal. And His words about this glory imply that He brings it with Him, not only to show Himself as He is, but also for the sake of communicating it to those who have confessed Him. This is also implied in the following words, in which He promises the vision of His glory to some of those standing there. He does not say, in so many words, that He will show them His saints glorified along with Himself. But He speaks of His own coming in His Kingdom, and of the Kingdom coming in power, and when we turn to the history of the fulfilment of this promise in the Trans-

figuration, we find that the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom and in power, means that He is not only glorified in His own Human Nature, but that He shares His glory with His chosen servants. For this is the true glory of Jesus Christ, that which He has in His own Person, and which He communicates to those who belong to Him, and who are, in many senses of the words, one with Him.

In the account of these words given us by St. Matthew, we find a further clause added. 'For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father and the holy Angels, and then will He render to every man according to his works.' The being ashamed of some and not ashamed of others, which the former words speak of, are therefore to have this practical issue in the appointment of the recompence due, whether to the faithful or to the unfaithful. This will be the shame of the Son of Man, of which our Lord speaks, that He will not be able to confess before God and the Angels the servants who have deserted Him, that He will not have any eternal reward to allot in their case. This, we may think, was that part of the chalice of the Passion which He especially prayed, in the Garden, might pass from Him, if it were possible—the loss of those who might have been saved, and whom He intended to save. His work will be fruitless in them, He will have died for them in vain. They will not have been His true followers. They will have saved their lives in this world to lose them in the sight of God. They will not have taken up their cross, denied themselves, and, above all, they will not have followed Him. Thus another great motive is added to the others of which He has already spoken. In the former passage, men

are spoken of as having to look after their own interests. They are urged by the consideration of what it is to lose their souls, or to save their souls, to act in a manner which will secure them against so terrible a loss, and win for them so marvellous a gain. Now they are rather spoken of as servants who have a work and a labour to accomplish, and who are to receive at the end of the day what they have earned, whether of good or of evil. The affair of their salvation is not one which they are free to undertake or to decline. They are the servants of a Master Who will come to exact an account and deal with them in rewards or punishments, according to their use of their opportunities. These last words, therefore, add the idea of the Judgment of God to the others which have been already put forward. He speaks as a Friend, a Captain, a Leader, a Benefactor, in the passage about being ashamed of those who are ashamed of Him. He speaks as a Master, a Sovereign, a Judge, when He speaks of dealing with every man according to his works.

But there was yet more in the counsels of God with regard to this glory of which our Lord here speaks, than had been hitherto declared by Him. It was intended, not only that the future glory of our Lord should be urged upon the disciples and others, at the same time that the humiliation and sufferings of the Passion were revealed to them, as well as the obligation incumbent on all Christians of following our Lord in the bearing of the Cross, but also that some special experience of the same glory should be vouchsafed to some at least among their number. For the sufferings and humiliations were to be seen and known by all, they were to be the constant subjects of prayer and contemplation and

commemoration in all ages of the Church. It was convenient, therefore, that there should be some chosen witnesses of the glory also, which could not be manifested to all until that great Day of which our Lord had spoken. These witnesses might leave behind them their testimony as the foundation of Christian hope and courage in all generations. Such a thing might indeed have been left to faith, but the condescensions of our Lord in what He has done for the strengthening of our hope are so great and so tender, that it might have been expected that He would provide in this way also for our consolation, especially as the glory of which He speaks was to be the fruit and reward of the sufferings which He had foretold. For though the glory of His Body belonged to it by right, by virtue of the Hypostatic Union and of the glory of His Soul which for ever enjoyed the fulness of the Beatific Vision, it was also to be one of those things which He was to merit by His Passion, and was to be communicated to others in virtue of the merit of that Passion.

As the promise of this glory was to be so strong a motive to Christians for the endurance of the trials which would beset them in the service of our Lord, it was well that some foretaste of it should be given at least to some, who might testify to others of what they had seen. It seems better, therefore, to understand this promise, with so many of the Fathers, of the glimpse of glory which was afforded to the three Apostles in the Transfiguration, rather than of what the whole body of them saw at the time of the Resurrection and Ascension, or of the Kingdom of God generally understood, in the preaching and spread of the Gospel Kingdom. And if this interpretation be right, we have an instance here of the modest and

humble way in which our Lord speaks of His greatest boons, and of the manner in which He promises always far less than He means to give. For He only says that some of them are not to die before they see the Kingdom of God in power, whereas it was in His mind to grant the boon of which He speaks almost immediately, after an interval of one week only. And the words, 'the Kingdom of God in power,' and the like, must have seemed to St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, very cold and scanty as a description of that most enrapturing sight which met their eyes on the mountain of the Transfiguration, a sight which made them quite beside themselves with joy, and which, as we learn from the Epistles of St. Peter and St. John, they seem never to have been able to forget.

CHAPTER III.

The Transfiguration.

St. Matt. xvii. 1—13; St. Mark ix. 1—12; St. Luke ix. 28—36;
Story of the Gospels, § 83.

The Evangelists tell us that, within the short space of a week after the promise made by our Lord, that some of those who had heard His instruction about the necessity of taking up the cross and the like, should not taste of death before they had seen the Kingdom of God coming in power, He fulfilled the promise in His own magnificent way, by the mystery of the Transfiguration. 'And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and leadeth them up into a mountain apart by themselves, and went up into a mountain to pray, and was transfigured before them. And while He prayed the shape of His countenance was altered and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white and glistening, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.' The space of time is given by St. Luke as about eight days 'after these words,' but it is clear that he means the same space of time as that stated in the other accounts. The interval between the two days was six, without counting the day on which the promise was made, and the day on which it was fulfilled, which two being included make up eight days. The mountain is commonly supposed to have

been Mount Tabor, and it seems safe to adhere to the ancient tradition, without the authority of which we might be inclined, with some Catholic commentators and the great majority of modern writers, to suppose that it might have been Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in that part of the country, and not at all far from the scene of the Confession of St. Peter.

The Sacred Text speaks of the Transfiguration as having taken place before these three chosen witnesses only. They are the three whom our Lord took with Him on the few occasions when He made some distinction of this kind, as when He went into the room to raise the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and when He retired apart to pray in the Garden of Gethsemani at the beginning of the Sacred Passion. In the former instance it was for a very short time that the separation was made, and perhaps it would have been inconvenient to take with Him the whole body of the Twelve. In the cases of the Transfiguration and Agony in the Garden, there were probably other and more spiritual reasons for a selection. In this case our Lord was granting a very special favour, and disclosing one of the great secrets of the Kingdom, which it was not expedient to communicate to all. Perhaps also He wished to exclude Judas from this mystery, and if Judas was to be excluded, it must be done in a way that did not mark him out as in any special way unworthy. This was brought about by the selection of a very few. As our Lord's companions were to be absent for at least the whole night, we may suppose that St. Andrew, who was more likely than any other to have been joined with his brother and the two sons of Zebedee in such a privilege, was left in a kind of

authority, that the rest might have some one to look to as Superior in cases of emergency. But we cannot be mistaken in seeing in the selection of these three of the Twelve on the most solemn occasions of the Transfiguration and the Agony, a design of fitting them by their knowledge of the first for the great trial of the last.

It may probably have been our Lord's way frequently to take with Him some two or three when He went into the mountains or elsewhere for the purpose of spending the night in prayer. Sometimes, on the other hand, He went up altogether alone, as seems to have been the case before He called the Twelve Apostles solemnly, and it is mentioned after the miracle of the Five Loaves that He went up to pray Himself alone, after sending the disciples away in the boat. Thus the selection of the three may not have attracted any great amount of attention on this occasion. This would have prevented the three Apostles from being catechized on their return by the rest, as to what had passed in the night of their absence, and enabled them to keep the secret without difficulty. For there seem to be many reasons for thinking that the mystery took place during the night.

The connection between the prayer of our Lord and His glorious Transfiguration is specially noted for us by St. Luke. This feature is quite in keeping with the general spirit of the third Gospel. We are not, of course, told what was the subject of the prayer or contemplation of our Lord, though it perhaps might not be unsafe to gather it from the mystery which followed. The Transfiguration is described with almost entire identity of language by the three historians. It is thought by theologians

that the manifestation of the Face shining like the sun was an assumption on our Lord's part of the gift of clarity, as it is called, which is to be possessed by all the bodies of the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven. This gift belonged to our Lord by two titles, for it was a natural consequence of the Hypostatic Union, and it also naturally belonged to a Body which was united to a Soul which enjoyed the Beatific Vision. But it was the plan of God that our Lord should also merit this gift for Himself and all who belong to Him by the sufferings of His Body in the course of His life and especially by the sufferings of the Sacred Passion. Thus the manifestation of it on this occasion is closely connected with the doctrine which He had been laying down, of the Cross, and of the glory by which the bearing of the Cross was to be rewarded.

We have spoken of this glory as an assumption of the gift of clarity, of course for a time only, but it is well to remember that it is thought that this gift, being connatural to our Lord's Body for the reasons just now mentioned, was in truth rather held in check miraculously at other times in order that the designs of God in the dispensation of the Incarnation might be accomplished. These designs required that our Lord should have a passible Body, and that the glory which belonged to it should not be manifested to those who saw Him and conversed with Him, lest the appointed mystery of the Passion might not be carried out. Thus the Transfiguration may be considered as the manifestation of what was always or would have always been seen, if it had not been for that concealment of glory which was necessary. It is commonly thought that the glory of the Body has its root and principle in the glory of the Soul which

dwells within it, a glory which shines through the temple and shrine of flesh and blood, in which the soul is placed as its principle of life and inseparable companion. The Gospels mention a difference between the splendour which was seen in the Face of our Lord and the splendour of His raiment. The difference is that which exists between the light of the unclouded sun, and the light with which the sun adorns the clouds through which he passes and which become as it were his raiment, and which shine, not with the same radiance as his, but with a perfect and ineffable whiteness from the light which shines behind them and through them. His Face was like the sun, His raiment like the snow.

As our Lord in His promise of the vision spoke of this manifestation as that of the glory of the Kingdom of God, which He had mentioned as a motive for faithfulness in bearing the Cross and the like, we must take that account of it so given by Him as furnishing the motives for which He condescended to make the manifestation. We may consider that it was meant to confirm just those points of doctrine on which our Lord had insisted. But these points were not few. The instruction which He had given implied that He was to come to judge the world in the glory of the Father, to render to every man according to his works. It called Him the Son of Man, and that name contained at least implicitly and inferentially the truth that He was the Incarnate Son of God. The manifestation of the glory which was seen in the Transfiguration did not in itself prove more than that His Body was the temple of a beatified soul, or at most the Body of the Incarnate Son of God. It was not a direct

manifestation of His Divinity which no man can see and live. And as we shall see, the glory which was seen in His Body was not, perhaps, different in kind as to appearance from that which was seen also in the glorified bodies of Moses and Elias. But, taken in connection with the instruction of which it was the promised sequel and authentic proof, it signified the other truths contained in that instruction. And it led on to still further and higher manifestations and declarations, which raise this mystery of the Transfiguration to a level with the very loftiest of the mysteries contained in the history of the Gospels.

In itself, then, it had the most direct connection with the doctrine of the Cross. It was designed to raise the courage and confidence of the Apostles, both to the taking up of their own cross after our Lord's example, and to the sublime faith in His Divine Person which was required to override the approaching scandal of the Passion, to make them see, in the coming humiliation of Him Whom they knew to be the Son of God, not only no difficulty, but a truth which confirmed the great doctrine which to weaker minds it might seem to impugn, the truth that St. Paul refers to when he says that it was 'fitting that God by Whom and for Whom were all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering,'[1] and which our Lord Himself set forth to the disciples whom He joined on the road to Emmaus, saying, 'Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and so, that is by means of them, enter into His glory?'[2] It showed them the Body which was to be the Victim for the Redemption of the world, the Body which was to be subjected to every kind of outrage and dis-

[1] Heb. ii. 10. [2] St. Luke xxiv. 26.

figurement on the Cross, clothed with a beauty and majesty and glory such as to take them out of their senses and make them forget everything else in the world, in their delight at the vision. And it showed them also, as we shall see, that this glory was not for Himself alone, but was to be communicated to His saints. It is the 'Kingdom of God,' the 'Kingdom of God coming in power,' of which our Lord had spoken in His promise. The Kingdom includes the subjects as well as the King. Thus the vision became a direct encouragement to themselves in their following of our Lord, as well as a confirmation of all that they believed concerning Him and His Mission. This would be true of the Transfiguration, even if we had not more truths to consider in this mystery. For the Transfiguration itself was but a part, and the first part, of all that was now manifested to the three chosen Apostles.

We have hinted that the impression made by the vision of the Transfiguration on the Apostles who witnessed it, was not only immensely powerful at the time, but such as to remain with them as a perpetual and indelible motive for hope and expectation of heavenly glories for themselves and all Christians. The great St. James passed away from the scene of his earthly labours without leaving behind him any record which is numbered among the Apostolical writings. The two others, St. John and St. Peter, were the witnesses to the Church of what they had seen. 'We saw His glory,' says St. John, 'the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,'[3] that is, we saw a glory worthy to be the glory of the Incarnate Son of God. St. Peter, in his last Epistle, written

[3] St. John i. 14.

not long before his martyrdom, speaks of it also. 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but having been made eye-witnesses of His Majesty, for He received from God the Father honour and glory, the Voice coming down to Him from the exceeding glory,'[4] and the rest. The doctrine of the glory of the body after the Resurrection rests on the truth of the possession, by our Lord's Body, of the gifts of which theologians tell us in treating of this subject. But, if we ask when the manifestation of this possession was made, we find it rather in the mystery of the Transfiguration than in any of the appearances after the Resurrection, although it is undoubted that at that later time our Lord exercised these gifts. But that one which strikes the eye the most of all, the gift of clarity, is not mentioned as having been witnessed by the Apostles after the Resurrection. Yet we find this doctrine of the glorification of the bodies of the saints more than once urged by St. Paul, who not having been an Apostle at this time of the Transfiguration, must have heard of it from the others, and who, as is so constantly his manner, draws it out from theological reasons, instead of simply asserting it as a truth resting on testimony.

Thus, in the great passage in the eighth chapter to the Romans, he says that he 'reckons' or considers 'that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.' And he adduces three arguments, one from the expectation of the whole creation, which 'waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God, for the creation was made subject to vanity,' that is, to corruption

[4] 2 St. Peter i. 16.

decay, change, 'not willingly,' that is, not by any intrinsic reason, but on account of the fall of man for whose use it was made, by 'Him that made it subject in hope.' And then, after speaking of the 'groaning and travailing in pain of the whole creation,' he adds that there is the same phenomenon in ourselves, 'who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.' He speaks, therefore, of the glorification of the body after the Resurrection as the completion and final consummation of our adoption as the sons of God through our Lord. And in this he may be understood as referring to the same filiation of which St. Peter speaks, our being made the sons of God by a participation of that incommunicable privilege of which the words of the Father heard out of the bright cloud spoke in this mystery. And St. Paul adds, in the third place, the groaning and prayer which the Holy Ghost himself produces in us, 'helping,' as he says, 'our infirmity, asking for us with unspeakable groanings.'[5] And in another place, to the Philippians, after speaking against the men who make a god of their belly and the like, that is, the men who seek their satisfaction in the present enjoyments of the body, he adds, 'our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will reform the body of our vileness, made like unto the Body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.'[6] These things show us at least the extent to which this mystery of the Transfiguration influences Christian belief with regard to the future glories of Heaven.

[5] Romans viii. 18—23. [6] Philipp. iii. 20, 21.

But this might have been true, if there had been no other partners in the mystery but our Lord and His Apostles. There must have been a special intention in the Divine counsels in consequence of which the two Saints of the Old Testament were summoned from their repose to bear a part in this wonderful vision. It does not seem to be the belief of the Church that the presence of Moses and Elias was merely apparent and not real, at least as to the souls of these great saints, and as to the body in which Elias was seen. There is only question as to the actual resurrection of the body of Moses from the dead, and the reunion of his soul with his body, which in that case must probably have returned again to the grave after the mystery. Moses and Elias were really present with our Lord. Considering them simply as saints of the Old Covenant, they would represent the truth that the glory of our Lord was, as has been said, to be communicated to the bodies of the saints hereafter, whether of the New Testament or of the Old. But the presence of these two saints in particular may seem to require some special explanation. Many of the Fathers consider them as chosen because they would naturally represent the Law and the Prophets. Thus the truth of our Lord's Mission and Kingdom would be testified to by the chief person in each of these dispensations. There could be no longer any ground for hesitating as to the claims of our Lord in general, or in particular, as to that doctrine of the Cross which He had lately been teaching, when He was seen in glory, in company with these two greatest of the saints. Moses had spoken in particular of the Prophet Who was to be like himself and to come into the world. We know that the coming of the one great Prophet

was expected by the Jews, from the question that had been formally put to St. John Baptist by the priests of Jerusalem, asking him whether he were the Christ, or Elias, or the Prophet.[7] The mention of Elias in the same question shows us a reason for his presence also, for our Lord is thus accompanied by the two whose testimony could be of most force, Moses who had predicted Him, and Elias who was expected to go before Him. We find the Apostles themselves asking, on their way down from the mountain, why the Scribes said that Elias was first to come? And his appearance in the mystery must have suggested the question which our Lord took the opportunity of answering.

Another reason for the appearance of these two saints may be found in their history, especially in the fact that of them alone, among all the saints, is it recorded, that they anticipated our Lord in His long fast of forty days and nights. It seems to be for this that the Church sings the Gospel of the Transfiguration on the second Sunday in Lent, having used for the first Sunday the Gospel of the Fasting and Temptation of our Lord. In this way there may possibly be some reference to the example of these saints in their selection as witnesses now, as if, though they had not typified our Lord in any actual passion or suffering unto death, they had won the right to be considered as patterns of those who bear their daily cross after Him, and so might naturally be considered as fit to be placed by His side in this mystery, in which the merit and reward of such suffering is set forth in the glory which is purchased thereby. These seem to be the reasons which may be given for the

[7] St. John i. 25.

presence of Moses and Elias in particular on this great occasion.

'And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, Elias with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.' St. Luke here adds considerably to the account as given by the two former Evangelists. He tells us that the two men who were with our Lord appeared 'in majesty,' and that they spoke of 'His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem.' That is, they were seen in glorious bodies and shining raiment, like our Lord Himself, and they spoke with Him about His Passion, which was to take place in Jerusalem. By this it seems to be meant that they conversed with Him of the details and the circumstances of the death that He was to die in the Holy City, although the mention of Jerusalem may be a note inserted by the historian to direct the attention back to our Lord's own prediction about what was to take place there. It would seem in any case that it is meant that we should understand the connection of the whole mystery with the prediction of the Passion, and the doctrine of the Cross which had immediately followed on that prediction, as if it had been our Lord's purpose to make the Vision a confirmation, in the minds of the Apostles, of that teaching in particular.

But there would not be required any special motive of this kind to guide the minds of these two glorious servants of our Lord to the thought and mention of the Passion, which was in itself so singular and unique in its importance in the scheme of salvation. For the Passion might naturally be the first thing of all on which the minds and discourse of such saints would dwell. Moreover, the glory in which they now found themselves for the first time, was to be the

direct fruit of the Passion in a peculiar way. For what He won in the Passion He won for our sakes, and the glory won by the Passion was already His by other titles, as we have seen. Thus there would be a twofold reason for this subject of discourse, and it is easy to imagine the rapturous gratitude of servants of God so full of love and zeal at having our Lord before them in His glory, at being able to gaze upon His Sacred Humanity, and on finding themselves bound, by their own share in His Transfiguration, to pay Him especial thanks and honour for so great a blessing, which they were now to enjoy for a moment only, but which was to be the source to them of everlasting joys hereafter.

It has been said that there seems to be reasons for thinking that this mystery of the Transfiguration took place at night, and one of them is that now, as in the Agony in the Garden, we find that the disciples, whom our Lord had taken with Him, were oppressed by sleep. 'Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep. And waking, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.' The order of the circumstances seems to have been, that, while our Lord was praying, the disciples, who may have been extremely fatigued by the labours or journeyings of the day, were overcome by sleep, but they were roused by the great brightness, and they enjoyed for some considerable time the glorious vision, which so entranced them as to produce a kind of ecstasy, in which they were hardly masters of themselves. They did not speak, but enjoyed the vision in silent awe and wonder, and in the most intense delight. They listened to the words of our Lord talking with His chosen saints, and of the saints speaking with Him, in gratitude and admira-

tion of the coming Passion. It must have been from their words that they understood who the two men were, unless they had some preternatural intimation as to this, which is by no means unlikely. For in such sublime states of prayer the saints seem ordinarily to know who those are whom they see or who speak to them. We do not know how long the ecstasy lasted, and indeed there seems to be no measure of time on such occasions, and the deep peace and concentration of the mind on the one object with which it is occupied, makes it indifferent to, and unconscious of the flow of time. But at last, sooner or later, there seemed to be an end, for the two men who were talking with our Lord seemed to be departing from Him. It was then that St. Peter spoke, as we are told in the sacred history.

'And it came to pass, while they were departing from Him, Peter answering said to Jesus,' the interruption being made by way of answer, inasmuch as it was occasioned by the retirement of Moses and Elias, and was designed if possible to prevent it, 'Master, it is good for us to be here, and if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elias. For he knew not what he said, for they were struck with fear.' The fear may have been the awe with which so much glory and majesty might naturally inspire them, or it may have been a kind of sudden terror and alarm at the thought that they were to be deprived of the most entrancing sight. But in any case, St.Peter spoke as one beside himself, and he remembered afterwards his own words with a kind of wonder how he could have uttered them. The object uppermost in his mind, as it is disclosed by the words, must have been a great desire to retain the Saints as long as possible,

although it was a simple thought enough that those who were sharers in so much glory and majesty could be in any need of dwellings, made with hands, such as he and the other two could raise.

The words indicate the rapture and entrancement of the Apostles, as if they would have been glad enough never to leave the mountain, if they could but have enjoyed for ever the same beautiful sight, and listened to the same marvellous words. Thus we may gather from this that a mere passing sight of the glories of the Sacred Humanity, and of what is communicated of those glories to the blessed in Heaven, can produce delight enough even to satisfy and more than satisfy the natural craving of our nature for such enjoyments. And this may have been the effect which our Lord intended to produce when He vouchsafed this favour to the Apostles, as if He had wished to give them such a foretaste of the glory of which He had spoken, as would put an end, at once and for ever, to all their low and weak thoughts about the Cross and the sufferings which He had foretold for Himself and also for His followers, by raising their minds to the higher expectations of ineffable joy which would be founded on this great vision.

The words of the Apostle are commented on by the Fathers and Christian writers as showing in many ways how far he must have been from a full mastery of himself to speak them. To propose that they should remain in the holy mountain permanently, was to propose to find the enjoyment of Heaven upon earth, the happiness of the country to which we are on the road, while he was still on the road. Peter thought so much of the glory which he saw, that he imagined it was the essential glory in which the

Beatitude of the next world consists. But that Beatitude is the clear Vision of God, not the sight for a moment of the beautiful face of our Lord in His Humanity, shining as the sun, and the rest, which, after all, are but shadows of the ineffable glories on which we are to feed for ever. Moreover, his words imply that he and his companions were already ripe for everlasting joys without more ado, while their crowns were yet to be won, their battles yet to be fought, their work as yet hardly begun. The true life of blessedness can only be reached through death, and long years of labour and suffering for our Lord lay between the momentary joy of the Transfiguration and the crucifixion of this blessed Apostle on the Janiculum.

Still less reason was there in the imagination that the saints in glory and our Lord Himself could need the tabernacles which human hands could raise, or that the raising of them could detain for a moment the servants of God if the will of God called them elsewhere. The manifestation was to pass, as far as Moses and Elias were to have a part in it, though there was more to come for the faithful disciples to witness. The words of Peter were not altogether unfruitful, for in later days, when the Holy Land became the chosen resort of Christian devotion, the 'three tabernacles' of which the Apostle had spoken were raised on Mount Tabor in the form of three churches, one for our Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elias. And on the slope of the hill below another chapel was placed, on the spot marked out by tradition as that where our Lord afterwards gave the Apostles the charge to tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man was risen from the dead.

No answer was given to the words of St. Peter,

but the glorious scene passed on to another stage of the mysterious manifestation of the greatness of our Lord which it was now the will of the Father to make. 'And as he was yet speaking these things, there came a bright cloud and overshadowed them, and they were afraid when they entered into the cloud. And lo a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing fell on their faces and were very much afraid. And whilst the voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them, Arise, and fear not. And immediately looking about they saw no man any more, and lifting up their eyes, they saw no one but only Jesus.' It is clear that this part of the manifestation is altogether distinct from the other. The display of glory in our Lord's Human Body and in those of the two ancient Saints passes away, and gives place to another mystery which forms one of the two great manifestations of the Ever Blessed Trinity which are related in the Gospels. Our minds are at once carried back to the Baptism of our Lord, with which this scene is directly connected by the Words of the Father. The order of what is here related seems to have been, that while St. Peter was speaking about the three Tabernacles the bright cloud gathered, as it were, in the air, and enfolded in itself our Lord and the two ancient Saints, while at the same time it overshadowed the three disciples, and in some measure tempered the excessive brightness which dazzled their eyes. In the words of St. Luke, the distinction is made between the two sets of three. The fear of the disciples is attributed to the entrance of the 'others' into the cloud. After this comes the voice from Heaven, on

hearing which the disciples prostrate themselves, as in the presence of God, and then after awhile, our Lord comes and touches them, and they find themselves alone with Him.

The cloud of which the Gospels speak is connected by many of the Catholic writers with the cloud out of which God spoke to Moses and to the people of Israel at the time of the giving of the Law, and especially at the time when the promise was made of the Prophet who was to be raised up like unto Moses. Indeed, it is common in the Old Testament to find God speaking to those whom He so favours out of a cloud. Thus the appearance itself of the cloud may have prepared the disciples for some further communication as from God Himself. And this may have added to their fear. This cloud is said by St. Mark to have been bright and shining, and some of the Fathers see in this a distinction to be noted between the New and the Old Testaments, the cloud on Mount Sinai having been dark. St. Peter, from whom St. Mark must have had his description, speaks of the cloud as the 'excellent glory,'[8] as if there had been something very splendid and glorious about the appearance. St. Paul, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, has a great passage in which he contrasts the ministries of the two Testaments respectively on this particular point of glory. He reminds the priests of Corinth, to whom he is writing, of the glory of the Old Covenant, how the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which, he says, 'is made void,' and he argues, 'How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory?' that is, more glorious than the ministration

[8] 2 St. Peter i. 17.

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of the letter. Then he goes on to say that Moses had to put a veil on his face that they might be able to bear its splendour thus veiled, and he says that the Jews have still that veil upon them when Moses is read to them, but on the other hand, 'We all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.'[9]

'And they were afraid as they entered into the cloud,' both from the awfulness of so much glory, and also perhaps at finding themselves separated from the others, for our Lord, with Moses and Elias, was enfolded in the cloud from which they were themselves excluded. The Voice from the cloud was the Voice which had been heard from Heaven at the time of our Lord's Baptism, spoke in the Person of the Eternal Father Himself, and gave the same testimony to our Lord in words almost identical with those which had then been heard, at least by St. John Baptist, if not by others, among whom it is not impossible that his disciples may have been, among whom these three Apostles had been numbered at the time. On the former occasion the words seem to have been in the first instance addressed to our Lord Himself, 'Thou art My Beloved Son,' and the rest, and afterwards repeated for other. 'This is My Beloved Son.' At the time of the Transfiguration there seem not to have been any words directly addressed to our Lord. On the other hand, the injunction, 'Hear ye Him,' occurs on this occasion alone.

The first words of the utterance from the bright cloud, or as it is called by St. Peter, from the excellent glory, 'This is My Beloved Son,' are rather

[9] 2 Cor. iii. 7, seq.

more forcible in the Greek original, which has 'This is That My Beloved Son.' It is easy to see that our Lord is thus pointed out by the Father as His Son in a manner of His own, which is not communicable to any other, for, if it had been meant that we should understand the words of an adopted Son, they would not mark out our Lord as different in this respect from Moses and Elias, and indeed from all God's adopted children. The words moreover seem to refer to some promise or prediction, as if it had been said, This is that Beloved Son of Mine Whom you have been taught to expect, of Whom the Prophets have spoken, to Whom all the types of the Old Law looked forward, as their fulfilment, this is that Son of My Love in Whom I am well pleased. The words have a special force, as we shall see, when, considered as referring back to the promise made through Moses to the people, of which we shall speak presently. The promise is recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, where Moses says to them, 'As thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the assembly was gathered together, and saidst, Let me not hear any more the Voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see any more this exceeding great fire, lest I die. And the Lord said to me, They have spoken all things well. I will raise up to them a Prophet out of the midst of their brethren, like to thee, and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And he that will not hear His words which He shall speak in My Name, I will be the avenger.'[10] But the words here used rise far above the promise, because they speak not of a Prophet like Moses, but of the only-begotten Son of God. They may have

[10] Deut. xviii. 16, seq.

been in the mind of St. Paul when he wrote in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that God, 'Who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son.'[11]

When the Divine Words go on to speak of our Lord, not only as the Son Who is One with His Father in substance, but also as the Son of His love, on Whom His love rests, they seem to signify a kind of anticipation of the objection that might rise to the mind when men saw Him crucified and apparently abandoned by God, as Isaias says, 'smitten of God and humbled.' It might be thought that He was a Son under the displeasure of His Father, instead of being in that very humiliation of His the object of His most special delight. Or the same words may convey to us the thought of the immense love for us of God, in giving us His own only-begotten and most dear Son to be our Teacher and our Redeemer. It may also be understood that these words express the difference between the Old and the New Law, a difference founded on and summed up in the truth that our Lord was the Son of the Love and Delight of God, and that therefore the Law which He gives must be a Law of love, a Law which opened to us the loving compassion of the Father, a Law which secures us the adoption of sons, and all the treasures of God's most tender love, a Law therefore for children, not for servants. In all these respects the Gospel Law is such as might have been expected when it was confided to the Son of God Himself, instead of to a servant even so highly honoured and regarded by God as Moses. This contrast between the servant and the Son is drawn

[11] Heb. i. 1.

out by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says that 'Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be said, but Christ as the Son in His own house, Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and glory of hope unto the end.'[12] Thus this single word 'beloved' contains a great amount of foundation for our Christian hope and confidence.

But the same hope and confidence are immensely increased by the word which follows in the Greek, which is rendered, 'in Whom I am well pleased.' Something has been said before in this work about the meaning of the 'good pleasure' or good will of God, which is first mentioned in the New Testament in the song of the holy Angels at the Nativity, 'On earth peace to men of good will, or to men of the good will.' For the good will or pleasure of God is that Eternal Counsel and determination of His to bring us to His glory and possession in Heaven, by means of our Lord, and our call to this is not founded on any deserts or merits of our own in the first instance, but springs from the free spontaneous choice of His own good will, although it is a part of that choice that we should be capable of having a share of our own in the gaining of the reward. From this original spring has flowed the whole mighty volume of the beneficence of God towards us, and it is this good will and free bounty of God which is embodied in the Person of our Lord. It was the cause of His Incarnation, of His Life and sufferings, and its carrying out and execution are the fruit of His Precious Blood, and the end and object of the whole system in which the benefits of

[12] Heb. iii. 5.

His Redemption are stored up and administered to the souls of men in the Church. This free choice and decree of God was one of the thoughts in which St. Paul specially delighted, and he speaks of it and of various parts of the great Counsel, in several places in his Epistles. It gives a fresh light as to the meaning of these solemn words of the Eternal Father with regard to our Lord, to understand that the word here used to express His good pleasure or delight in the Incarnate Son is the same which is used in so many places in which the great decree of salvation is referred to. Our Lord is thus solemnly declared to be the chosen instrument and means and channel of this good pleasure. Without this, the words, considered in their simple and ordinary meaning, express the truth that our Lord in His Sacred Humanity is the object of the great delight and joy of the Father, and on this account He is the Person to Whose character and example and instructions we are to look for guidance, how to become ourselves pleasing to God. It is natural enough merely from this consideration to look to Him as our guide. But if we add to this the truth that God delights in Him in this special way, placing in Him the execution of His most loving and bountiful decree, we see still more clearly that in Him and through Him alone can we hope to have a share in the benefits which that decree involves, and thus the declaration of the Father directs us to Him, not merely as the pattern of all excellence but as the channel of all His graces.

The last words of this declaration, 'Hear ye Him,' which are not found in the history of the parallel mystery of our Lord's Baptism, seem to confirm the impression that there is all through this manifestation

a reference to that promise made to the people through Moses of which mention has been made. For that promise included a command that the Prophet then foretold should be obeyed in all that He spoke in the Name of God, and it seems also to be implied in the passage of Deuteronomy that there would be danger lest His words should not meet with the requisite obedience, for a severe threat is added on those who do not obey. Thus we have our Lord not only declared to be the Chosen Minister of God for the execution of His good pleasure and merciful will, but He is also made the official Teacher of the people, for Whom they had so long been looking, and they are commanded with equal solemnity to listen to His teaching. The words may have had a special meaning in the ears of Peter and his companions, and they may have understood them as enjoining on them a particular obedience to that part of our Lord's doctrine which was so new to them at that moment, and which seemed to them to be strange and unworthy of Him, the doctrine of the Passion and that also of the Cross, as to be borne after Him by all Christians. This was to be the characteristic of the last stage of our Lord's teaching, which begins from this time and lasts up to the end. It was a doctrine founded upon His Divinity and unintelligible without that foundation. It was consequently, for more reasons than one, reserved for the latter period of the Public Life, although its principles may be discerned in the earlier teaching, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. But it was in the counsels of God to give to it this special authority and sanction, which are contained in this beautiful mystery of the Transfiguration, which is placed at the outset of this last portion of

the Public Life as the Baptism is placed at the outset of the former period.

It has already been hinted that there is a great resemblance between these two mysteries. One of the most important points of this resemblance must be thought to consist in the manifestation in each of these mysteries of the Three Divine Persons of the Godhead. In the earlier mystery this is perhaps more evident than in the latter. For in the Baptism of our Lord there is the appearance of the Holy Ghost in a bodily form like a dove, as well as the Voice of the Eternal Father and the Presence of our Lord Himself, declared from Heaven, as now, to be the Beloved Son. But in the Transfiguration the presence of the Holy Spirit is to be found in the bright cloud in which our Lord and His saints entered, and which overshadowed the three disciples. For as some of the Fathers tell us, He is the cloud which covers, protects, enlightens, and fertilizes everything good, without Whom, as the Church sings, there can be no supernatural good in us at all. In this way then the mystery of the Transfiguration is to be compared, as has been said, to the mystery of the Baptism.

This may perhaps be illustrated from the prayer which the Church puts into the mouths of her priests on the feast of the Transfiguration. She speaks first of the confirmation of the sacraments or mysteries of the faith by the witness of the Fathers, which took place in the Transfiguration. She means, we may suppose, the confirmation of the faith in our Lord's Divine Person and Mission by the testimony of the ancient saints, which confirmed incidentally, not merely the truth concerning His Person, but also the particular truths concerning His Passion and

the Redemption to be wrought thereby. Then she adds that God in the same mystery 'did marvellously foreshow the perfect adoption of sons, by the Voice which came down from the shining cloud.' In this she probably means that the Voice from Heaven declaring our Lord to be the Most Beloved Son of God, was a foreshowing of the perfect adoption of sons or filiation which we receive through our Lord. This was taught and promised by the declaration that our Lord, as seen in the Transfiguration, was the Beloved Son of God. For the perfection and completion of our adoption cannot be till we also receive the glory of the body, as well as the regeneration of the soul. This glorification of the body was especially shown in the Transfiguration. For our adoption consists in our being made like to our Lord, the true and natural Son, in all things in which we can be made like Him, and therefore our adoption is not complete, as long as there is anything in which we can resemble Him, in which we have not as yet attained to that resemblance.

The words of St. Thomas may suffice for an explanation on this point. 'The adoption of sons,' he says, is by a certain conformity of image to the natural Son of God. This takes place in two ways. It is brought about, first by the grace of life, which is an imperfect conformity. Secondly, by the glory of the heavenly country, which will be perfect conformity, as St. John says, 'Now we are the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, we know that when He shall have appeared we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is.' Therefore, since we obtain grace by Baptism, and because in the Transfiguration is foreshown the clarity of the future glory, therefore both in the

Baptism and in the Transfiguration it was fitting that the natural Sonship of Christ should be manifested by the witness of the Father, because He alone, together with the Son and the Holy Ghost, is perfectly conscious of that perfect Generation of the Son.' Further on he says, that 'as in the Baptism of our Lord in which the mystery of the first regeneration was declared, there was shown the operation of the whole Trinity, in that there was there the Incarnate Son, and the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of the Dove, and the Father was there shown by the Voice, so in the Transfiguration, which is the sacrament of the second regeneration, the whole Trinity appeared, the Father in the Voice, the Son in the Man Christ Jesus, and the Holy Ghost in the Bright Cloud. For as in Baptism He gives innocence, which is represented by the simplicity of the dove, so in the Resurrection He will give to His elect the clarity of glory, and refreshment from all evil, which are represented in the bright cloud.'[13]

This doctrine of St. Thomas is enough to explain to us the correspondence, and at the same time the contrast, between these two great mysteries of the Baptism and the Transfiguration of our Lord. In each of them there is a stage gained in the process of the perfect adoption of sons, which is ours by virtue of the natural and incommunicable filiation of our Lord to His Eternal Father. It cannot well be denied that the ancient saints of the Old Testament received something of this adoptive relationship to God, as many of the Fathers teach, and we know that when St. Paul counts up the special privileges of the chosen people, he places among

[13] St. Thomas iii. qu. xlv. art. 4.

them this of 'the adoption and the glory.' But under the Old Law the adoption was rudimentary, whereas by virtue of the Baptism of our Lord it is imparted in a far more perfect form by what St. Thomas has called in the passage just now quoted, 'the first adoption.' This is given us when we are regenerated in Baptism, and is the fruit of our Lord's Baptism in one sense, and of the Redemption of the Cross in another. But this adoption is not all, it is not perfect, it raises us to a state of Sons of God in a sense in which we had not that state and dignity before, we receive in it the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Adoption, and of children, our state is no longer that of servants but of sons, as St. Paul often argues. But it cannot be said that our adoption is perfected until we are made partakers of the glory of the body which is foreshown in the mystery of which we have been speaking. And thus we find St. Paul himself speaking of the 'redemption of the body'[14] as the adoption of the Sons of God, and of the whole creation expecting the revelation of the Sons of God as the signal for its own liberation from the bondage of corruption. The Transfiguration stands in relation to this in somewhat the same position as the Baptism of our Lord at the first adoption of which St. Thomas speaks. And inasmuch as in each of these adoptions we receive something of the filiation of our Lord to His Father, through His Sacred Humanity, it is natural that in these two mysteries alone of His life upon earth, there should be this manifestion of the Blessed Trinity and the words of the Eternal Father declaring that our Lord in His Human Nature also is His most dearly loved Son, the Source and Fountain of all sonship to Him in others than Himself.

[14] Rom. viii. 23.

'And as they came down from the mountain Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen again from the dead. And they kept the words to themselves, questioning together what they should mean, when He shall be risen from the dead. And they held their peace and told no man in those days any of those things they had seen.' The natural disposition of most men, when they have seen or heard of anything wonderful, is to desire to communicate it, and this desire is not simply the result of a wish to let others share the knowledge of marvels, for, it is often mixed up with a subtle self-complacency, in being the channel by which such great tidings are spread abroad. Thus there might have been a temptation to self-satisfaction in the Apostles if they had told the others what they had seen, and our Lord was at this time especially occupied in rooting out anything that savoured of love and pre-eminence among them. The other Apostles also might have taken offence at the preference of the chosen three, when they were told of the great glories which they had witnessed. Besides this, the time for the mention of this mystery was naturally to be found after the great action of our Lord by which the glory of His Body was to be won, although, as we have seen, it was already His due.

But, again, the relation of the Transfiguration might have been a temptation to incredulity, even among some of the Apostles, and it might also have served to increase their danger at the time of the Passion, which might appear to cast a cloud of doubt over the whole story, and thus to impair faith in other truths as well as in this. For those who have been favoured in this sublime way, as is

the case sometimes with persons who give themselves to prayer, few things are more trying than to have a doubt cast on the certainty of such revelations, especially if they have been made the ground, in any way or degree, of action, or of enterprises for the glory of God. If doubts, and much more if any disbelief, take possession of the mind, it is more difficult to remove the danger in persons who have known of such marvels, than if they had never known them. It may also be thought that if the Transfiguration had been made a subject of conversation among the Apostles it must have got out among the other disciples and have become the property of the world. And thus the danger of scandal at the time of the Passion would have been largely increased by being spread more widely. And perhaps also if it had been believed, it might have in some way or degree, hindered the execution of the Passion, as St. Paul says, that if the princes of the world had known they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.'[15]

On the other hand, after the Resurrection there would be every reason for the proclaiming the mystery, for it would shed so much light on the qualities and gifts of the Body of our Lord in its new state. The Cross was then to be preached more than ever, and it was well that the Apostles should now possess that knowledge which our Lord had already promised to some among them. Thus we find St. Paul full of the glory of the body, which is the sequel of the Resurrection, and which flows to us from the Resurrection of our Lord, but of which He did not, as it seems, give any experience to them at that time, although He appears to have exercised

[15] 1 Cor. ii. 8.

other of the marvellous gifts, as when He passed so rapidly from place to place, and entered the room though the doors were closed. Christian hope was to be continually fed upon the future glory of the body, which was all the more natural as a subject of instruction and prayer to the heathen converts, who were reclaimed in many instances from a life of corruption, and who were called on to renounce many indulgences which they had not before understood to be forbidden them. We find nothing more characteristic of the early Churches than this continual expectation of our Lord's return in glory, in order that He might glorify His saints.

And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the Pharisees and the Scribes say that Elias must come first? And He answering them said to them, 'Elias indeed when he shall come first shall restore all things. But I say to you that Elias is already come and they knew him not, but have done to him whatsover they would, and as it is written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things of them and be despised. Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them of John the Baptist.' The appearance of Elias with Moses as the companion of our Lord in the glory of the Transfiguration, naturally suggested the question which is here mentioned. In truth the prediction concerning Elias was much more clear in reference to his coming before the second Advent of our Lord than to his coming before the first. The disciples had not as yet become familiar with the truth that the Scriptures blended the two comings together, and spoke of both at the same time. They probably expected that at least there would be no distance of time between the first and second advent of our Lord, and that His

final Kingdom was immediately at hand. This expectation would have been confirmed by the mystery which they had witnessed, although they did not well understand the 'decease' which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. If then the Kingdom was to come at once, how was it that Elias had not appeared? It is highly probable that this was often objected to them in the days of their early preaching to the Jews, that in this respect, at all events, the prophecies had not yet been fulfilled. They did not themselves doubt the Mission and Kingdom of our Lord, but it was a difficulty to them that the sign of the advent of Elias had not yet been seen.

Our Lord's answer does not contain a full solution of all the questions which might be asked about Elias. But it explains sufficiently the principle on which all these questions were to be answered, namely, that there were to be two comings of Elias, in the last of which only he was to be present in person. Elias was truly to come and to restore all things. It had been said in the prophecy of Malachias, 'Behold I will send you Elias the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with anathema.'[16] It is said also of him in the book of Ecclesiasticus, 'Who art registered in the judgments of times to appease the wrath of the Lord, to reconcile the heart of the father to the son and to restore the tribes of Jacob.'[17] These words clearly refer to the future coming of Elias, and it is also plain from the context of the passage in Malachias that that also refers to the same. Our Lord then simply

[16] Mal. iv. 5. [17] Ecclus. xliii. 10.

removes the difficulty from the minds of the Apostles, without going into the full explanation of the two advents, and of the different manner in which Elias was and is to precede each of the two, the first by coming in spirit in the person of St. John, and the second by coming in his own person. What He says about Elias coming and restoring all things is to be understood of the future coming, according to the direct meaning of the prophecies, and what He says about Elias having already come is said for the purpose of answering the difficulty that might be raised against the truth of His own Mission, from the fact that that coming of Elias was as yet apparently unaccomplished.

'But I say unto you that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they would.' For St. John had been sent before the face of our Lord, in the spirit and power of Elias, as the angel said to St. Zachary, at the time of the announcement of his birth. This was the fulfilment of the prophecy as far as it was to have its fulfilment in the time of the first advent, and this therefore was sufficient to remove the difficulty raised against the Mission of our Lord. Thus St. John could most truly say that he was not Elias, in the sense in which the coming of Elias had been directly predicted by Malachias, and at the same time our Lord could most truly say that St. John was Elias, because he had gone before the Advent of the Incarnate Son of God as the promised Messias, and by his preaching and example and testimony to the Person of our Lord had prepared the people to receive Him. As a matter of fact and history, the great mass of those who received our Lord had been prepared so to do by the preaching of St. John.

Moreover, the preaching of St. John, the preaching of penitence and conversion, is always working in the Church for the same end, and with the same effect, as the actual ministry of the Baptist. For in all ages and all over the world men can only receive the Gospel benefits on the condition of penitence and faith, and it is the work of the Baptist, continued in the ministry of the Church, which brings about the fulfilment of these conditions, especially that of repentance.

Our Lord adds two things to the statement that Elias had already come, both of which make strongly for the purpose which He had in view during all this period of His teaching. For He said that the Jews did not know Elias when he was sent, and had done to him what they would. And He also adds a further declaration that treatment of the same kind is in store for the Son of Man Himself, and that this had been the subject of prophecy. When He speaks of their having done to him whatsoever they would, He speaks it seems generally of the whole treatment of St. John by the nation, especially its rulers. For though the common people had welcomed St. John and profited much by his teaching, which had prepared them for our Lord, still he had been received with coldness and even hostility by the Scribes and Pharisees, who were too proud to place themselves under him and too impure in their lives to conceive a true repentance for their sins. It is not at all impossible that if he had been welcomed with the same readiness by the ecclesiastical rulers and chiefs as by the people, Herod would not have dared to deal with him as he did. The rulers at Jerusalem rejected him, and perhaps were glad enough when this witness to our Lord, whose whole life and preaching was a

reproach to themselves, and whose influence with the people roused their jealousy, was silenced by the imprisonment which preceded and prepared for his murder. Thus their acquiescence was secured by the lascivious king, and when once entirely in his power, St. John was at any moment liable to all the plots of Herodias. In this way the whole nation was more or less responsible for his murder, though it was the personal act only of Herod and his adulterous paramour. And this treatment of the Precursor of our Lord naturally led His mind on to that great subject of His thoughts and desires at this time, 'the decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem,' of which His chosen saints had spoken to Him on the holy mountain of the Transfiguration.

'So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them, and as it is written of the Son of Man that He must suffer many things and be despised.' The words seem to be meant not simply to supplement the statement concerning the treatment of St. John Baptist, of which we have been speaking, by a similar statement concerning the Messias Himself, but to imply the fitness and congruousness of the rejection of the Baptist, from the predictions concerning the Son of Man. The disciples were puzzled by the apparent want of the fulfilment of the prophecies in the case of Elias. But he had already come and been rejected. They were to see the same issue of the coming of the Son of Man Himself. And this issue made it almost necessary that there should first have been a rejection of the Precursor. For if the Precursor's mission had succeeded, it would not have been possible for the Messias to be rejected. But the prophecies spoke plainly of the rejection of the Messias, though it might be said they did not say the

same of Elias, who was to go before Him. But the Elias who was appointed to go before the Messias in His first coming had been treated according to the law and rule of that first coming, which was that of rejection and suffering on the part of the envoys of God. Instead of this being any reason for a difficulty about the truth of the Mission of the Messias, it was a confirmation of it, and it might prepare them for the approaching operation of the same law in more startling manner and instance, in the fulfilment in the case of the Son of Man Himself of the predictions of His rejection and Passion. They must make their minds up to this, and expect to see our Lord treated as His forerunner had already been treated by those to whom He was most immediately sent.

St. Matthew adds that the disciples then understood that He had been speaking to them of John the Baptist. He had before recorded our Lord's words in which He had directly said that 'if they could receive it,' John was Elias who was to come. He had closed His encomium on St. John by those words, spoken in such a way as to imply that there might be some difficulty about discerning in St. John the character and mission of which He spoke, and also that it would be a blessed thing for them if they could understand this truth. It would not only enlighten them as to the greatness and position of St. John in the Kingdom of Heaven, but also prepare their minds for the reception of the still more difficult truth of the coming rejection and Passion of our Lord. Thus the sight of the great Elias on the holy mountain had suggested a difficulty to the disciples which our Lord, in His own gentle way, had turned into a confirmation of the doctrine on which His instruction of them at this time was chiefly occupied.

CHAPTER IV.

The Lunatic Boy.

St. Matt. xvii. 14—22; St. Mark ix. 13—31; St. Luke ix. 37—45; *Story of the Gospels*, § 84.

It appears, as has been said, that the Transfiguration of our Lord took place during the night, and it may have lasted a considerable time. Our Lord came down from the mountain in the morning, and on the way down the conversation occurred of which we have last spoken. The day may have been some hours old before our Lord and the Apostles came in sight of the plain at the immediate foot of the mountain. At least there had been time for a crowd to collect around the nine disciples who had been left below.

Among the crowd was the father of the boy whose cure comes next in the history. He had with him his poor child, and it is evident that there was much excitement among the people, in consequence of what had happened concerning him. The Apostles had endeavoured to cast out the devil from him, and had not been able. There had been in them, as our Lord afterwards told them, a want of perfect faith, and there had been want of faith also in the father and in the people interested in the case. Thus our Lord was immediately confronted, in more ways than one, with the miseries which He had been sent to relieve. There was the poor victim himself, who had all his short life been subjected to the most terrible effects

of diabolical possession. There was the afflicted father, representing the calamities of a thousand homes and families like his own, in which the same deep misery was to be found. There was the perverse and incredulous populace, who could not be raised to perfect faith even by all the miracles of our Lord. And there was also the weakness and consequent inefficiency of His own servants, who might have done for the poor father and his boy the act of mercy and power which the case required, but who had failed, and this, to some extent, increased the incredulity of the people, and brought shame on themselves, and incidentally on their Master.

The whole incident is typical. It represents what is always going on in the world and in the Church. By the mercy of God we have not the experience which was probably common enough in the Holy Land in those days, and which must have been still more common elsewhere, where the power of Satan was less controlled by the worship and ministers of the true God, the experience of diabolical possessions in our families. But there are worse things in the world, and in Christian society, even than diabolical possessions. For those might be when there was no moral fault in the sufferers themselves, and families can be made desolate or miserable by vice, or lust, or the indulgence of any bad passion, which may cause greater and more lasting sorrows than this affliction of the poor boy. There are thousands of unhappy homes, liable to disturbances and calamities of every kind, simply from the existence of ordinary moral or spiritual evils, which always destroy peace if they do not bring on immediate ruin. The lively faith of a large population could do much towards restraining these

miseries, but there are often large Christian populations among whom the faith is cold and languid, and where charity fails. Political agitation, or the general lust after money, or habits of indulgence in some prevalent sin, such as drunkenness, or impurity, foster the evils and spread them far and wide. And in the meantime the representatives of our Lord are lacking in faith, or they do not understand the necessity of the union of prayer with mortification to obtain graces from Heaven for the people committed to their charge, or perhaps they are carried away by the stream, and so increase the discord and unhappiness they are set to cure. Our Lord on the mountain had made no answer to St. Peter's words about building three tabernacles, for it was good for them to be there: The answer was to be given in the state of things in which they were to find the disciples and the people at the foot of the mountain. It was, indeed, a foolish thought that the passing glories seen on the mountain were in themselves more than a momentary and external glimpse of the true bliss of Heaven. But even if it had been otherwise, our Lord and the Apostles had work enough to do in the world before the time of rest came, and the scene on the plain below when they had descended the mountain was a kind of picture of the needs of the world which were as yet unhealed.

'And it came to pass, the day following when they came down from the mountain, there met Him a great multitude, and coming to His disciples He saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes disputing with them. And presently all the people, seeing Jesus, were astonished and struck with fear, and running to Him, they saluted Him. And He asked them, What do you question about among you?'

The ineffectual attempt made by the nine Apostles to deliver the poor boy seems to have given occasion to the scribes, who were haunting the footsteps of our Lord and His company, to proceed to trouble them with questions and objections, as if it might be more easy to perplex them, or even to shake their faith, when their Master was absent. Thus the appearance of our Lord may have seemed wonderfully happy and well timed to the multitude, and this may account for the astonishment now manifested. Or perhaps the glory of the Transfiguration might not have entirely passed away from the Face of our Blessed Lord, the outward expression of the calm and intense joy with which His Soul was always bathed. They ran to Him with outstretched arms, and welcomed Him with reverence and delight. He had come to them as He had come to the disciples on the night of their rowing against the winds and waves on the sea of Galilee, and their delight was all the greater for the trouble in which they were, and which would not have been but for His absence. And then He calmly asked what they were disputing about, not that He did not know, but that He might help their excitement to allay its violence. He began by restoring peace and confidence before doing more. The faith which He was to require as the condition of the miracle must be founded on this tranquillity.

'And when He was come to the multitude, there came to Him a man falling down on his knees before Him, saying, Lord have pity on my son. Master, I have brought my son to Thee. I beseech Thee look on my son, for he is my only one. He is a lunatic and suffereth much, having a dumb spirit, who wheresoever he taketh him, seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him down and teareth

him and dasheth him, so that he foameth, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him. He foameth and gnasheth with the teeth and pineth away. He falleth oftentime into the fire, and often into water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not cure Him, they were not able.' Different words of the poor father are related by the different writers of the Gospels, and it is not wonderful, for a man in such circumstances would pour himself out in a multitude of incoherent words, passing from one symptom to another without order, and the several accounts in the Gospels, to some extent, restore the order without adding anything to his words. The account in St. Matthew dwells especially on the phenomena of the case as one of lunacy and epilepsy, while the descriptions in the other two Gospels are those of demoniacal possession. The case was one of epilepsy, brought on by the agency of the possessing fiend. The evil had been on the boy from his earliest years, and the father gives a touching description of its effects. There is a sort of complaint and reproach about his language, as if our Lord was responsible for the failure of those teaching and healing in His Name, a complaint continually echoed in the history of the Church and in daily life. For there are many comparative failures in the Church to heal the ills which still she has the power to heal, because in individual cases that power is paralyzed, at least in great measure, by the unfaithfulness of men.

Our Lord was in no hurry to remedy the evil. He took His own time, each moment serving to calm and soothe the excitement around Him, and to communicate to the father, on whose faith so much depended, His own ineffable peace. He began with

a rebuke and complaint, 'Then Jesus answered and said, O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? And how long shall I suffer you? Bring hither thy son, bring him unto Me, and they brought him.' The words of our Lord are quite general, and seem to be addressed to the people at large, without any special limitation to the people now collected around the disciples. For there was widespread want of faith in the whole people, especially among those who had witnessed so many of our Lord's miracles and heard His teaching, and this was one great reason why He Himself did not do more numerous miracles, and must have acted also powerfully in checking the communicated powers of the Apostles. Then among the crowd now assembled it must probably have been the case that there were many unbelievers, especially as the scribes, His enemies, were there at work. And lastly the disciples themselves were not without their share in the common reproach, as we see on other occasions besides this. The words show the immense patience of our Lord under so many provocations to leave them to themselves. They disclose this patience of His for our benefit, rather than any irritation or even anger on His part, and it adds to our intelligence concerning His Life and Preaching, that this Divine patience should be set before our minds. This again adds a most fruitful subject of contemplation and meditation. For the patience of God with man is one of the most wonderful of His attributes, of which we see the exercise daily. It must be the marvel of the angels and saints, who are described in the Apocalypse of St. John as crying out, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' It is an attribute of which each one must see the exercise in his own life, though he may

never be able in this life to sound all its depths. For the patience of God stretches itself far beyond all our imaginations of its extent. Our Lord now and then allowed Himself to disclose its trials, as when He spoke so strongly of the reprobation which was to fall on the cities in which He had done so many of His mighty works of mercy. And the time was now not far off when He was indeed to leave Galilee, and when they would desire, as He said, to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and would not be able.

At least, however, they were obedient to our Lord's command, and the child was brought to Him. 'And they brought him, and when He had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him and, being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming.' We owe all these details which follow to the careful memory of St. Peter, who guided the pen of St. Mark. The devil felt himself drawn towards the presence of his Master, and was all the more tortured by the thought because he had, as it were, mocked our Lord's power as wielded by the hands of the disciples. It was always so with the devils. They were most reluctant to come into the near presence of our Lord, as they now tremble at His approach in the Blessed Sacrament. But our Lord did not show any sign of hurry. 'And He asked his father, how long time is it since this hath happened to Him?' That is, how long since this affliction began? 'But he said, from his infancy. And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire, and into waters to destroy him. But if Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us.' The father was impatient, though not altogether deficient in faith, and every moment the power of grace was gaining upon him, and 'Jesus said to him, If thou

canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out with tears, said, I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief!'

This beautiful prayer and profession of faith may be reckoned among the great inspirations of which we have a certain number in the Gospels, as when the centurion sent the message to our Lord that he was not worthy that He should enter under his roof, or when the Syrophœnician mother answered Him that the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the children's table. In all such cases there is great humility inspired by the Holy Ghost, and at the same time faith and hope and confidence. This man is changed already from the state of mind in which he had uttered his former petition, 'If Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us.' And he probably had the grace to see, from our Lord's answer to that, the fault of the incredulity which it expressed. We must be careful to catch well the force of the Greek words in this passage. The man had said to our Lord, 'If Thou canst do anything'—and our Lord takes up the words, 'If thou canst believe.' And it is remarkable that some of the most authoritative manuscripts leave out altogether the word, 'believe,' as if our Lord had said, 'if Thou canst, sayest thou? All things are possible to the believing.' And it is very curious that the sentence has the article prefixed, 'the if thou canst,' though the exact force of the language may be difficult to render in English. It seems in any case to have been our Lord's intention to plant in his mind the truth that the want of power could not be in Himself, though it might be in the person making the prayer to Him. But He puts this in the gentler way

by saying that the power required was to be sought rather in the person praying, than in the person to whom the prayer was made. Let him furnish the faith on his part, and he would see that all things are possible to the believing. And this poor man seems to have been raised by the grace of God to the height of faith which was required, for he cried out with tears, as St. Mark tells us, 'Lord, I do believe, and do Thou help my unbelief.'

These words have been variously explained. They may mean that he did not doubt the power of God or of our Lord, but that he felt his confidence in the working of the miracle then and there, to be weak, and if this amounted to an incredulity sufficient to hinder the granting of the grace which he sought, he prayed our Lord in His mercy to supply the deficiency. And in this he was guided by a right and holy instinct. For hesitation as to the granting of the particular petition which we may make may be enough to mar the fruit of prayer, made not without faith in the general power of God and in His willingness to assist. Thus St. James says strongly in his Epistle, 'Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind, therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.'[1] And our Lord, in a passage which refers to an occasion like the present, the words after the withering of the fig-tree, says, after speaking again of the removing of mountains by faith, 'Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you shall ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive and they shall come unto you.'[2] It is as if He had told us, as we should say, whenever we

[1] St. James i. 7. [2] St. Mark ix. 25.

have asked for anything, to make an act of faith as to the granting of it on the part of God, of faith not merely in the power of God in general, but in His promise to give us what we ask in particular. It may have been some feeling of His own deficiency in this respect which prompted this prayer on the part of the father of the child, and we may gather from the effect of the prayer that our Lord granted what he asked, mercifully strengthening his weakness of faith.

'And Jesus when He saw the multitude running together, He threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him and enter not any more into him! And crying out and greatly tearing him he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said he is dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand lifted him up and he arose. He cured the boy and restored him to his father.' Our Lord probably wished on this occasion that the miracle should be public and should attract attention, on account of the advantage which had been taken by the scribes of the failure of the disciples to set the victim free. In like manner His words are definite, specifying the character of the spirit by which the boy was possessed, and making it clear by His language and by its effect that it was a true case of demoniacal possession. The reluctance of the evil spirit to leave his prey is marked by the use he made for the few moments left to him, to inflict as much pain and misery as he could. His immense malice prompted him to kill the boy if he could, and it seems that the effect was nearly that of producing death. Our Lord made His work perfect, in raising him by His hand, and giving him to his father.

It was of course to be expected that the disciples should ask our Lord, in their perfect and simple confidence in His charity, about their own failure in this case. 'And when He was come into the house, the disciples came to Jesus secretly and said, Why could not we cast him out?' The question implies that in ordinary cases they exercised this power without difficulty. In this great matter it was well for them to have this experience of their own impotence, which, as we shall see, was partly to be attributed to their own fault, but partly also to the truth that there are various classes of devils and that not all of them are equally submissive to the ministers of the Church. 'Jesus said to them, because of your unbelief. For Amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast forth but by prayer and fasting.' It is easy to understand the two reasons here conjoined. There had, as has been said, been some defect of faith on the part of the disciples, as well as on the part of the people, or of the father of the boy. Perhaps there had been something more than usually appalling about the violence of the demon. Perhaps the Apostles had been a little troubled at the preference given to the chosen three, and this may have led to a decay of the vigour of faith in their souls. Perhaps they had lost courage in finding themselves alone without their Master and the chiefs of their own body. For the perfection of faith may sometimes be impaired by any decline in the spiritual state of the soul, as it may certainly be affected by the loss of peace and tranquillity. The substance of faith may not be lost even by grave moral declension, and this

is true even of the faith of which our Lord speaks, which is a consummation of faith in the ordinary sense of the name. For St. Paul's words about having faith so as to move mountains and yet not having charity, are explicit, and indeed they seem to refer to this passage in our Lord's teaching, and they are also confirmed by daily experience. For we constantly see people who have kept the faith and even suffered much for it, or who are at least the descendants of those who have so suffered, guilty of great and outrageous crimes against charity and justice. We must gather from these words of our Lord that there was some interior cause for this declension on the part of the nine Apostles, though He did not distinctly charge them in the presence of the multitudes with want of faith.

'For, Amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,' and the rest. It does not seem as if our Lord, in using His favourite image of the grain of mustard seed, meant to say that however small an amount of faith, if it was real, would suffice. The image, as He uses it, implies something that is in its beginnings small, but which has a great vitality and power of expansion and assimilation inherent in it, and thus, though small at first, grows to fill a large space and be endowed with a mighty influence. The faith that is like a grain of mustard seed in this sense is a principle that spreads its influence through the whole character and affects the whole life. It is aggressive in the sense that it leaves no action or thought untouched, it modifies the mind and its judgments, the aspirations and whole conduct, so that there is nothing in the daily life of a person who has this kind of faith which is not an exercise thereof in some sense or manner. These

persons recognize the existence of the things that are matters of faith on every side of them at all moments of the day. They look on their most natural ties and duties and relationships with the eye of faith. They instinctively look to what is interior, and reckon of all things as they are in the sight of God. He is always present in their thoughts as watching, penetrating, judging, and compassionating them, they look on all things coming to them as acts or decrees of His, and measure all possibilities by His power and all probabilities by His promises. To such persons the faith of miracles comes naturally. That is, they live in an atmosphere in which the supernatural and the preternatural are as readily expected as the ordinary workings of the laws of the universe.

Even then there is, as our Lord here tells the Apostles, a further condition required by the rules of the Kingdom of God. He tells them that that particular kind of devil does not ordinarily go out without prayer, and fasting as well as prayer. If we could see the whole of the marvellous system in which the agencies of the evil spirits are permitted, and even employed by God for the purposes of His own wisdom, we should probably be astonished at the perfect order and subordination which reigns even there, where all appears to us the most bewildering confusion. The powers of the evil spirits are most exactly regulated, first by the constitution of their natures, and then by the particular decrees under which liberty is permitted to them in single cases by God. Some are more malicious, more powerful, more rebellious, than others, and it pleases our Lord God that they should require greater exertions and more fervent and self-denying prayer when the powers of the Church against them

are to be wielded by her ministers or her children. So it is not wonderful that there should be some kinds of devils who yield up their prey only to strong prayer aided by fasting. It is ordinary in His Providence that prayer, to be greatly efficacious, should be accompanied by something that costs much to the person who prays. Thus it is common to find in spiritual writers that fasting and mortification must be the companions of a prayer that is meant to be successful. For these things are in our power, and if we do not do all in our power, we cannot expect God to exert an extraordinary beneficence in our regard. It is but little to fast, but it is what we have it in our power to do. The casting out of a devil is something far beyond the ordinary fruits of prayer, and it is well that such great exertions of the power of our Lord communicated to the Church should require extraordinary intensity in the efforts by which they are to be brought about.

We find it stated by some of the Catholic writers that the Jews considered the deaf and dumb spirit more difficult than others to cast out, because a deaf person cannot hear what is said to him and so his intelligence cannot be reached, while a dumb person on the other hand can give you no intimation of what is passing in his own mind. There is here at least a very intelligible reason for the moral difficulty of bringing round to reason or to faith any one who is practically deaf to all exhortations and instructions, and from whom we can elicit nothing to guide us in our approaches to his soul. Something of this kind has already been noted in the history of the demoniac out of whom the devil was cast, on the occasion which led the Scribes and Pharisees into their fearful blasphemy about the league between our Lord and

Satan for the purpose of casting out the devils, and when the people said that 'it never was so seen in Israel.'[3] It is probable that when our Lord spoke of that kind of devil which was only to be ejected by fasting and prayer, He did not mean to speak only of those devils by whose agency this particular kind of suffering and incapacity was produced, but of a class of spirits superior to others generally in power and tenacity.

The passage before us is one of those which have given occasion to the discussion, among Catholic writers, concerning the various kinds of faith which are spoken of in the New Testament. The theological virtue which we all know by the name of faith, is sometimes distinguished from the faith which is here spoken of, which is called the faith of miracles. And besides these, there is the faith of which St. Paul speaks when he enumerates the graces which are called *gratis datæ*, such as the gift of tongues and the like, which may be possessed by persons who are not in the grace of God. The best opinion as to the two first seems to be that there is no real difference between the faith which is a theological virtue and the faith of miracles. In the latter case, besides the theological grasp of the truth concerning God and the truths of the Catholic creed, and especially of the Omnipotence of God and His willingness to help us, His faithfulness to His promises and the like, there must be the additional condition, which is something outside the simple theological faith itself, of the application of faith to the case before the mind, the persuasion that God will here and now hear the prayer and work the miracle. This condition does not of necessity

[3] St. Matt. ix. 33.

require a new supernatural motive, as the assent on which it rests may be grounded, especially in persons habitually conversant with God, on the certainty of faith that God will hear prayer where the conditions for a successful prayer are to be found, and on a prudent judgment that those conditions are present in the particular case. And there is probably, in all such persons, a distinct guidance and inspiration by which they are led to this persuasion in particular cases. The faith which is one of the gifts *gratis datæ* seems most probably to be a divinely given facility, which is sometimes found in uneducated and simple persons, of understanding the doctrines and mysteries of the faith and of setting them before others in simple but wonderfully clear words. For in the passage of St. Paul in which the list of these gifts is found, the mention of this faith occurs with that of other gifts, which have relation to the explanation and proposal to others of Divine truths.[4]

It would seem that in ordinary cases, faith of the theological kind was required in those who were the recipients of the benefit as well as in the workers of the miracle, though there must have been many instances in which the miracle was worked for the simple sake of vindicating some Divine truth or of drawing attention to the claim of some messenger of God. Our Lord ordinarily required faith in those for whom He worked miracles, and we have distinct statements in the Gospels that He would not or, as it is said, could not work miracles in particular cases because of the unbelief of the people, as for instance, in Nazareth. In the case of the miracle of which we are now speaking, faith was required in the person

[4] 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

for whom the grace was asked, or rather by whom it was asked for his child. Thus our Lord upbraided the people in general, on His first coming to the place where the lunatic boy was. But further, faith was required in the persons who were to work the miracle also, the faith, as we have said, which is called the faith of miracles. The Apostles cannot be supposed to have been deficient in the theological virtue of faith. But they may have lacked what has been spoken of as the condition necessary for a miracle, and this was what our Lord meant when He told them that they had failed because of their unbelief. He added, moreover, the other reason, of the very great power and malignity of this particular evil spirit, which could only be cast out, ordinarily, after the exorcist had given himself to prayer and fasting. It has been said that the theologians who maintain the substantial identity of the two kinds of faith spoken of, also teach that what is required in the person who is to work the miracle need not be a faith founded upon any revelation as to the presence, in the given case, of all the circumstances required for the accomplishment of God's promises to prayer, but it may rest on a prudent conclusion of moral certainty, aided no doubt by some special inspiration or assistance from God.

CHAPTER V.

Last Teachings in Galilee.

St. Matt. xvii. 21, 22; St. Mark ix. 29—31; St. Luke ix. 44, 45; St. John vii. 1; *Story of the Gospels*, §§ 84, 85.

We are now approaching the close of that period of our Lord's public teaching which was spent, for the greater part, in His favourite province of Galilee. The point of time at which the Transfiguration took place is not certainly determined for us by anything in the Gospels, though there seems to be no reason for rejecting the date suggested to us by the Church, which keeps the anniversary on the 6th of August. This mystery, therefore, brings us to within eight or nine months of the Passion itself. Since the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, which we are told happened about the feast of the Pasch, our Lord's course was from place to place, without resting long at any one spot. We do not hear much of His teaching in public to large bodies of men, though it does not seem likely that He had ceased to be a centre of attraction to the multitudes, if it were only on account of His miracles of mercy. He had for some time not let Himself be seen much in the places in which He had formerly taught most frequently and most freely. At the time of the Confession of St. Peter He was at the extreme north of the Holy Land. This has probably suggested to many modern commentators the thought that the

Transfiguration itself took place on the lofty mountain of Hermon, which forms the most remarkable feature in the topography of that part of Syria. It is not, however, at all certain that we can build any safe conjecture from the presence of our Lord in the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, as to this. It is certain that after the Transfiguration, or rather from the very date of the Confession itself, our Lord began once more to turn His steps southwards, and we find Him soon at Capharnaum itself, His coming to which city was marked by an incident which shows that He had been absent from it for some time.

The two certain points of time which enable us to fix the limits of the period of which we speak are these, the feast of the Pasch, which St. John tells us was at hand when the miracle of the five thousand was wrought, and the feast of Tabernacles, to which our Lord, as we shall see, proceeded after leaving Capharnaum, and which took place in the month of September. If we fix the Confession of St. Peter late in July, and the Transfiguration at about the time when the Church commemorates it, the interval between the miracle of the five loaves and the Confession is not too long for the incidents which are to be accounted for. The few hints which are given us as to what passed after that event, and before the emigration of our Lord to Judæa, enable us fairly enough to account for His movements before that change of scene. We are engaged on a time of the Public Life which has not a great number of recorded incidents, and as to which the miracles which are specially mentioned are few, but we can form for ourselves a sufficient picture by joining together the few notices which we possess.

The last Evangelist sums up for us the general

character of this whole time by the few words with which he introduces his account of the presence and teaching of our Lord at the feast of Tabernacles just now mentioned. His words are meant to furnish the reason why it was that our Lord paid so few visits to Judæa, it being the special object of the Gospel of St. John to be the historian of these visits and teachings, especially with regard to Jerusalem itself. St. Luke had preceded St. John in filling up, to a great extent, the gap left by the two first writers as to the preaching in Judæa in general. The account of St. John is that 'after these things,' that is after the miracle of the five loaves and the subsequent discourse in the synagogue of Capharnaum, which are the last subjects mentioned by that Evangelist before this point, 'Jesus walked in Galilee,'[1] that is, He continued to make that province His ordinary place of work, 'for He would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews,' by which name St. John usually means the rulers at Jerusalem in particular, 'sought to kill Him.' St. John refers to the hostility which had been aroused against our Lord by the cure of the impotent man at the pool, at the time of the second Pasch of His Public Life, a hostility which had never relented afterwards, and which had pursued Him with plots and persecution in Galilee itself. The words give us a general description of the whole period of which we have been speaking, and they come in at the present point of the fourth Gospel, because St. John was now about to relate a change on our Lord's part in the course of conduct which He had hitherto pursued, in the transference of the scene of His teaching to Judæa itself, notwithstanding the danger to His life which awaited Him there.

[1] St. John vii. 1.

Returning now to the point at which we left our Lord, at the conclusion of the incident of the cure of the lunatic boy, and the explanation which He had given to the nine Apostles about their failure to cast out the devil, we find a few incidents still to occupy us before we follow our Lord to the Holy City for the feast of Tabernacles. The first of these is the repetition on His part of the strong and clear prediction of His Passion. The miracle of the lunatic boy was one which attracted great attention, probably because it had followed on and, as it were, reversed the triumph of His enemies at the ill-success of the Apostles. But we may feel sure from the language of the Gospels that there were other miracles at this time to add to the splendour of our Lord's reputation among the people. He took occasion from the circumstances to renew the prediction of the Cross. 'And departing from thence,' that is from the neighbourhood of the mountain of the Transfiguration, 'they passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it. And all were astonished at the mighty power of God, and when they abode together in Galilee, and while all wondered at the things which He did, Jesus said to them, He taught His disciples and said to them, Lay you up in your hearts these words, for it shall come to pass that the Son of Man shall be betrayed and delivered into the hands of men, and after that He is killed He shall rise again the third day. But they understood not this word, and it was hid from them so that they perceived it not. But they were troubled exceedingly, and they understood not the word, and they were afraid to ask Him concerning this word.'[2] It is clear that this teaching was now

[2] St. Mark ix. 29—31; St. Luke ix. 44, 45.

again specially insisted on by our Lord, and that yet there was something in the minds of the disciples which prevented them from understanding it.

We need not seek far for the reason why our Lord was so urgent in the inculcation of this point of doctrine. The Passion was the great work of God for which, in a particular way, He had come upon earth. He had been obliged to leave it unmentioned for so long a time, it was now actually approaching, and everything depended on the faith of the Apostles not failing under the great trial to which they were to be exposed on account of it. The one safeguard of their faith seemed to be their belief in His Divinity, and it was only lately that they had arrived, by the teaching of the Father, at a firm grasp of this. Although our Lord must have known that at this time their hearts and minds were not fitted for the full and ready reception of this further truth of the Passion, yet it was for their benefit that they should be told of it frequently, on that principle which He afterwards expressed when He said at the Last Supper, 'Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe.'[3] For, though the prediction did not actually prevent the Passion from falling on them as a great surprise and trial, which affected to some extent their faith itself, yet when it had come about it was well that they had been warned, for the memory of the warning would help them to understand the prescience of our Lord, and so confirm their faith in His Divine Mission. Each of these repeated warnings would wake up in their recollections, and they would see how perfectly He had foreknown, and how faithfully He had foretold what was coming upon Himself and

[3] St. John xiv. 29.

them. This, therefore, would furnish them with a confirmation of faith, arising out of the very event which might seem to give it so rude a shock. Just in the same way the false miracles of Antichrist are predicted, which, if they were not predicted, might shake the faith of the elect, but which, having been predicted, will become fresh confirmations of that faith. And it is habitual with God in His Providence to bring things about which we do not understand at the time, but which we afterwards see to have a most loving purpose in preparing us for something which is in the unknown future, or in avoiding some danger of which we are only afterwards conscious.

On the other hand, this difficulty of the Apostles in grasping a prediction which was so unpalatable to them, which seemed to destroy all their hopes and cast a slur on the power of our Lord Himself, may be considered as an instance of what is too common as a matter of experience to cause any great wonder, namely, the instinctive aversion which men ordinarily have to looking at and considering truths which they do not wish to be true. On any other matter the word of our Lord would have been enough for them, nor would they willingly have turned their attention away from anything on which He seemed to insist. But in this case He was speaking of something altogether foreign to their customary thoughts, as well as altogether contrary to their wishes. If they had considered His words, they could not have failed to understand them, for they were plain enough in themselves. There was no deliberate turning away from them, but their minds could not be brought to look at the prediction, being occupied with thoughts altogether of a contrary hue on the very same subject

of the immediate future of His work and Mission. They were full of ideas of the proximate success of His preaching, of the establishment of the new Kingdom, in which they were to fill the most prominent posts, and this false prevision of the future shut out the different picture which was presented to them by our Lord Himself. Blindness, like this of the Apostles in the matter of the Passion, is constantly meeting us in our own histories and in the history of those around us, and we are often inclined to treat it with far less indulgence and forbearance in others, as for instance, in those brought up outside the Church, than our Lord here used, while we are also too much inclined to give over the statement of truths because they are not at first attended to.

The prediction of the Passion, as it is represented in these last words of the Gospel accounts, is in some respects different from that which has been given before. On that first occasion our Lord had dwelt particularly on the part which was to be taken in His murder by the chief priests and elders and scribes. He was to be killed, and rise again after three days. On this occasion He says nothing of these enemies of His, but inserts the more mournful prediction of His betrayal. This must of necessity be the act of a friend. The prediction of the Resurrection is repeated as before. The Gospels add that the word was hid from them so that they perceived it not, almost as if they were so heedless about it that it seemed never to have been spoken. And yet they were afraid to ask Him concerning it. It seems as if this might be taken as implying that it was the custom with the disciples to ask our Lord on such subjects, and indeed we have some instances in which we know them to have done so. Perhaps He often put for-

ward difficult matters in this way, for the very purpose of leading them on to question Him, and thus to give Him the opportunity of explaining the difficulty. He did this in more than one instance in the discourse after the institution of the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday.

On the occasion before us, the great truth which was kept back from the Apostles, and their ignorance of which made it difficult for them to understand what our Lord said about the Passion, was the connection between the Passion and the redemption of the world. It was one thing to be told simply that our Lord was to die, and the rest, and another to be instructed in the Divine reasons for this, which made His Death and Passion the most glorious work of all that He had come to perform for the honour of the Father and the benefit of mankind. And there seems to have been some Divine reason for keeping back, at least, the full promulgation of this doctrine until the time when it could be taught them by the Holy Ghost in a manner which would open to them the whole of the marvellous counsel of God contained in this mystery. When we read the Epistles of the Apostles, we see the wonderful difference which this knowledge would have made in them, and we thus come to understand in some measure the apparent obstinacy with which they held out against so many warnings from our Lord Himself, enforced moreover by the emphatic manner in which the warnings were given by Him. Thus, in the present case, He told them to lay His words up in their hearts, as if to imply that they were words above all others which it much behoved them to ponder upon. The Gospels also imply that the doctrine of the Cross was the chief and most familiar subject of instruction from our Lord

at this time. They were making their way through the country parts of Galilee, and were soon to be at Capharnaum for a short interval. Our Lord kept His presence secret for the same reasons which had induced Him to leave this city for so long a time. Thus there was comparatively little public teaching, and our Lord wished to use the time of quiet for the preparation of the hearts and minds of the Apostles in this most important part of their training for their great office in the Church.

We come now to a cluster of incidents, hanging apparently closely together, and all belonging to the short sojourn in Capharnaum which our Lord made at this time. They include the payment of the tribute of the didrachma by our Lord for Himself and St. Peter, the question among the disciples as to the point of precedence among them, the instruction given by our Lord in consequence of this question, and of the growing tendency to such disputes which now manifested itself, and the incident mentioned by St. Matthew of the prohibition by the disciples of a man whom they had found casting out devils in the name of our Lord, but who did not belong to their company. These incidents are not related in the exact order of time. For some of them seem to have taken place on the road before they reached Capharnaum, with the arrival at which place the narrative begins. Putting them together, we gain from them a picture of the manner in which these journeys of our Lord with His disciples were probably conducted. Our Lord seems to have led the way, according to His own description of the shepherd going before his sheep, as was usual in those countries. Thus the disciples, following in small groups, might hold conversations and raise questions among themselves.

They might also be separated from our Lord by some little distance, perhaps to avoid public attention, and thus it would be possible for them to fall in with the man who was casting out devils without our Lord actually witnessing what passed. On another and later occasion we find it mentioned how our Lord pressed on, as if hurrying towards Jerusalem, in a manner that struck the attention of the Apostles, and made them amazed and afraid. In the present case, the incident of the man who was casting out devils must have happened before the party reached Capharnaum, and that of the collectors of the tribute who questioned St. Peter, must have taken place as they were entering the town. The discussion, on the way, as to who should be the greater, may have happened after the one, and before the other.

'And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachma came to Peter, and said to him, Doth not your Master pay the didrachma? He said, Yes.' St. Peter answered on his own knowledge, as the didrachma was a yearly tax, and he must have known our Lord's habit in such matters. It was a tax imposed on all Jews for the service of the Temple, and its collection seems to have been made about the time of the three great feasts, one of which, the feast of Tabernacles, was now approaching. The sum paid by each Jew was half a shekel, or two drachmas in Greek money, and the amount thus collected yearly was very great, as the Jews in the distant provinces of the Empire made a point of sending their contributions regularly. Our Lord had been absent from Capharnaum for some time, as we have seen, and thus it had happened that He had not been in the way of paying this tax. The collectors applied to St. Peter, probably because he was well

known in the town as having his home there, or perhaps there may have been some common impression that he was marked out among the disciples as having some kind of pre-eminence. In this case also our Lord was not actually present when the question was asked, but when the company met in the house to which they were destined, He showed His perfect knowledge of what had taken place by His question to the Apostle: 'And when He was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? Of their own children, or of strangers? And he said, Of strangers. Jesus said to him, Then are the children free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea and cast in a hook, and that fish which shall first come up, take, and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a stater, take that and give it to them for Me and for thee.'

Our Lord seems to have wished to show that He was not obliged to pay this tax, being Himself the Lord of the Temple, for the service of which it was collected. At the same time He did not wish to raise any question, or to give offence by refusing, as He had all along acted as one who was subject to the Law, except in the case in which the Law had come to be stretched too rigidly, as in that of the Sabbath, on which the Jews had come to think that works of mercy and of necessity were forbidden. What is most remarkable about this incident is the way in which our Lord supplied the want of the coin for the tribute. There must have been many good friends of His in Capharnaum who would willingly have paid the money if they had known that He was in need of it, if indeed it could not have been taken

from the common stock of which Judas was the custodian. Our Lord never worked a miracle without need, and though the finding the stater in the mouth of the fish need not be considered as a miracle itself, still it was a display of Divine knowledge which could not but attract attention as beyond the ordinary powers of man. And yet our Lord chose this way of all others for the furnishing of the tribute money.

It seems most probable that our Lord did this to secure Himself from all possible misunderstanding. He had taken the pains to ask the question and elicit the answer from St. Peter, from which He made it clear that He paid the tribute only for the sake of avoiding the possible offence that might follow, if He asserted any right not to pay it, on the ground that He was the Son of God, the truth which St. Peter had lately confessed with so much commendation on the part of our Lord Himself, but which He did not desire to be preached publicly at that time, when the people were not prepared for it. It was well that He should allude to it in His language to St. Peter and the other Apostles, lest they might think that it was not a truth which was to influence the whole of His position in the world, and His relations to the laws and institutions of the Kingdom of His Father. It was well that He should let them see that He was to act as the King's Son in all things. Thus He preferred taking the coin which was required for the payment of this tax for the Temple out of the treasury of His Father, so to speak, and not out of the common fund which belonged to the community, and was given as an alms, nor out of the ever ready supplies which were open to Him from His friends, or the holy women

who followed Him and His Apostles for the purpose of ministering to their daily wants. He supplied the money in a royal way, to show that He was indeed the King, while at the same time this action must have confirmed the faith of the Apostles, and filled their hearts with joy. This may also help us to understand the reason why He ordered Peter to pay the tax for himself as well as for his Lord, with the coin he was to find in the mouth of the fish. It was a magnificent and princely act, associating to Himself the servant whom He employed in the payment of a tribute which was due rather to Him than from Him. It is said that there was no coin which exactly represented the two drachmas or the half shekel, while the stater was equal to the shekel. What has been said does not exclude the significance of the act as a mark of the close union between our Lord and the chief of the Apostles. This is but one of many such intimations of the kind of distinction which had been conferred on St. Peter. Each one of these by itself may seem to be of no great moment, but when they are taken together, they point to something in St. Peter which must have been a foundation for them, and they cannot be considered as accidental. Thus they make up a considerable chain of evidence drawn from the conduct of our Lord towards him.

The two other incidents which happened on the way to Capharnaum are only brought to our knowledge from what passed concerning them after the journey was over. We may suppose the actual course of the conversation which now followed to have been as we shall now state. St. Peter probably left the house immediately on receiving the injunction of our Lord to go to the lake and cast in the

hook. He would naturally be absent on this errand for some little time. It was probably during his absence that our Lord asked the question of the disciples, 'What did you treat of in the way?' The story is related by St. Mark who, like St. Luke, omits the incident of the didrachma. 'And when they came to Capharnaum, and when they were in the house, He asked them, What did you treat of in the way? And they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be greater. And there entered a thought into them which of them should be greater.' It throws some light on the methods of our Lord's dealing with the Apostles, if we suppose that it was ordinary with Him to require of them from time to time an account of their conversations, for the sake of lovingly instructing them on any subject that might need explanation, and also that it was their habit to give Him an account of what passed when He was not present, especially if they had exercised any authority, as in the case of the man of whom we shall presently have to make mention.

The causes of the discussion among them are not far to seek. There might always be an idea among them about the primacy of St. Peter, and St. John was also evidently most highly favoured by Him. St. Peter, with his brother, and the two sons of Zebedee, must have stood out from the rest in a kind of pre-eminence, if only on account of their having been so early among those called specially by our Lord. Lately there had been a singular act of favour shown to them, for the three had been selected to accompany our Lord to the mountain of the Transfiguration. And although they had been forbidden to speak on the subject of what had passed there, still the splendour of the

vision must have left an immense impression on their minds, and they must have felt themselves raised in some measure above their companions, who also could not help seeing that they had witnessed some great revelation of our Lord's glory. They may have remembered that He had promised that some of those present at the discourse about the Cross should see the Kingdom of God coming in power, and they may have surmised that the absence of the three with our Lord on that night may have been the fulfilment of that promise. It is true St. Andrew had been left below, but that may have been for the purpose of acting as the temporary leader of the others in the absence of our Lord. Besides this, it is probable that the wonderful words of our Lord to St. Peter, after his Confession, remained in the minds of the rest of the Twelve, to suggest naturally enough some great pre-eminence for him. If we add to these considerations the certain fact that they were all still full of the common ideas of the Jews as to the temporal greatness of the coming Kingdom, we have quite enough to account for the surmises that might arise among the Apostles as to who should be the greater.

There may have been some ambition among them, indeed, ambition there must have been, among persons who had these false notions as to the character of the Kingdom. It does not of necessity follow that this ambition was of an envious sort, such as to fill them with any jealousy or rancour against one another. But our Lord, Who had the whole future of His Church plainly mapped out before Him, would see at once how much of the most terrible danger might lurk under these beginnings of emulation. It does not follow either, that the thoughts of the Apostles were

in all cases for their own aggrandisement. There may have been various thoughts and wishes among them, some of which may have been like the ambition of the loving friend of David, Jonathan, who desired David to reign rather than himself, and that he might be next after him. It is not too much to think of St. Andrew that he might have wished for the elevation of his own brother, or that the Israelite without guile, the blessed Nathanael or Bartholomew, may have longed in the same way for the pre-eminence of Philip or John. But our Lord would see, even in these loving and unselfish ambitions, the germs of the evils which were hereafter to desolate the Church, to be immensely mischievous in themselves, and equally so in the amount of good which they would prevent.

CHAPTER VI.

The Apostles and the Exorcist.

St. Mark ix. 37—49; St. Luke ix. 49, 50; *Story of the Gospels*, § 86.

THERE is a special character about the instructions which belong to this short period of the close of the teachings in Galilee, which deserves to be pointed out. They are not teachings addressed to the people, but to the Apostles. They are the beginning of the class of instructions to which the counsels of perfection belong, which follow immediately in the Gospel of St. Matthew. For that Evangelist, whose chief care it is to secure his readers as much as possible of our Lord's doctrine, makes a great leap, in point of time, after the chapter on which we shall presently enter. These teachings are for the Apostles primarily. Our Lord was devoting Himself to their training, before passing to the busy and contentious scenes of preaching, which He was to enter on in Judæa and Jerusalem. The two great points on which we shall find Him insisting at this moment are to the danger of scandal and the duty of fraternal correction and forgiveness. Both of these matters were probably connected in His mind with the incipient danger of rivalries and so of divisions among the Apostolic body, which would break out inevitably, if the spirit of ambition were not at once checked. The discourse of which we are now to peak should probably be considered as the first

measure taken by our Lord towards the eradication of this nascent danger.

We have supposed that St. Peter was still absent on his mission, and if his position had been the question which had divided the opinions of the other Apostles, and still more if he had taken any part in the assertion of his own rights, it would be natural that they would be silent on the subject under such circumstances. They felt instinctively that the dispute was not likely to meet with the approbation of their Master, so they held their peace. Our Lord did not then repeat His question, but showed them by a significant action that He knew all that had passed and that it was contrary to the spirit of His Kingdom. 'But Jesus seeing the thoughts of their hearts, took a child and set him by Him. And sitting down He called the twelve and said to them, If any man desires to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.' This was all that He said immediately and directly on the point of the dispute. But He went on to apply a remedy to the very root of the malady. 'And taking a child, He set him in the midst of them, whom when He had embraced He saith to them, Whosoever shall receive one such child in My Name, receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me receiveth not Me but Him that sent Me, for he that is the lesser among you all he is the greater.'

This, therefore, is the first passage which relates to our Lord's method of dealing with the thoughts of ambition which He had discerned among His disciples. He says very little indeed about the point of rivalry directly, but He sets the child in the midst, rather turning their attention away to a different subject, that is, the care of the little ones

of the flock, though He says just the few words directly to the point, of the greatest being the last and the servant of all. The words are a comment on the action, and the action is a comment on the words. For the principle involved in the care of the little ones, because they represent our Lord and Him Who sent Him, implies the truth that all greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven is to be measured by the services done to our Lord and His Father in the care of souls, especially the most helpless, the weakest, the most naturally unable to repay for themselves the labours spent upon them. And, as in the ordinary ministrations of the Church of God those are the most humbling to human pride and ambition which are spent on such souls, it follows that the only true ambition in the Kingdom must be to be occupied on the unostentatious and laborious work, the work which has no reward or fame or conspicuous success to attract men to it, the work which none will be able to persevere in without great singleness of purpose, purity of intention, humility, and other like virtues. When it is once understood what is the work on which our Lord sets the most store, that which He rewards most lovingly and richly in the next world, then indeed there will be room for ambition, but ambition of the true Christian sort, which aims at being indeed the servant of all and the least of all. Thus our Lord laid down the principle that would cut down all false ambitions to the root, and set the hearts of Apostles and apostolic men on fire with a desire which could never be indulged too much or do any harm to others, because it would prompt them to nothing but a holy emulation in all most toilsome and laborious offices of charity and zeal.

It would seem that our Lord paused after this short exhortation and warning, and this gave an opportunity to St. John to interrupt Him with the mention of what had happened on the road, and of which no report had as yet been made to Him. 'John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name who followeth not us, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said to him, Forbid him not, for there is no man that doth a miracle in My Name and can soon speak evil of Me. For he that is not against you, is for you. For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My Name, because you belong to Christ, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.'

It may have been quite possible for a man who was not a disciple, in the part of the country through which our Lord had so frequently preached, to have observed the power of His Name over the devils, especially after the Apostles had been sent forth in the Name of their Master. As exorcisms were certainly practised by the Jews, and, as it seems from our Lord's way of speaking, not only by those in great authority, it would be possible for this man to use our Lord's Name in the most perfect good faith. If that was the case, the effect might follow by the permission of God, in the same way as when the Apostles themselves were the exorcists, using our Lord's Name. It is not unnatural for the Apostles to be jealous of such persons, and they might well desire to know from our Lord whether their action in prohibiting him had been right. It does not appear that the man had resisted the injunction. If this was so, it was another argument in favour of his good faith. The

words of our Lord, about receiving one little child in His Name, the magnificence of the statement that in such a child He Himself and His Eternal Father were relieved, may have made the Apostles doubt whether there was not here also some reproof implied for themselves. For if it was so good a work to receive a little child for the sake of our Lord, it may have seemed to be a work of far greater merit to be kind to a man who could cast out devils in the Name of our Lord. John and the Apostles had acted according to the best of their judgment, and now they wished to know whether their judgment had been correct.

Our Lord begins by telling them not to forbid such a man. He gives for this more than one reason. He does not blame them, nor impute any low motive to their action, as if that also had been an evidence of some ambition, or, at least, some tenacity about their own privileges and position. But He says that such a man was not to be forbidden. The first reason, as given by St. Mark, is that there is no one who can do a miracle in His Name who would easily speak evil of Him. The man in question was not an enemy. If he had been such, he would not have attempted to exorcise in the Name of our Lord. The test to be applied in such cases is that used by our Lord here. He says such a man would not easily speak evil of Him. This at once excludes a great number of the cases to which the question of the Apostles might seem to refer, in which, for instance, the doctrines of the Church are taught, and even her service and ritual are imitated, by persons of whom it certainly cannot be said that they do not speak evil of her. In many cases such persons are bound by the most solemn pledges that

can be exacted of men to speak and teach evil of the Catholic Church. But in the case before our Lord, the man in question would probably have been very glad to become more formally our Lord's disciple than he was. At the time when these words were spoken, the great weapon used by the enemies of our Lord against Him was the evil tongue. His words imply that the man of whom He spoke was not one of the band of Scribes and Pharisees who were dogging His steps and setting the people against Him.

The next reason given by our Lord for the toleration of this exorcist is expressed in the proverbial form of words, he that is not against you is for you. For such a man was advancing the cause which the Apostles had most at heart, the spread of the reputation and honour of our Lord, and he did not mar this good by any false speaking against Him. He was therefore labouring in the cause, though irregularly, and the whole of the influence which he might acquire by his success in casting out the devils would tend to the good effect of which we have spoken. And then our Lord adds a third reason, namely, that this man was doing them a service and a kindness in promoting what they had so much at heart, the honour of their Master. For 'whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of cold water only in My Name, because you belong to Me, to Christ, Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.' It may be said that the man who contributed so much to the spread of the knowledge and honour of our Lord by the casting out devils in His Name, did much more in the way of charity to the Apostles than if he had given them many cups of water. These are the three reasons alleged by our Lord in

this place for the line of conduct which they should have pursued, instead of forbidding the man from proceeding as he had hitherto done.

It is clear that these reasons of our Lord suggest a comparison with other sayings, whether of His own or of the Apostles, from which comparison a more perfect intelligence of the whole doctrine may be obtained. In the first place, we are reminded of the saying of our Lord with regard to the Pharisees, who had been the authors of the foul and wicked calumny against Him, that He cast out devils by means of a league with their prince. Of these men our Lord had said, he that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.[1] There seems at first sight to be some opposition here between what is said about the impossibility of neutrality in the conflict in which our Lord was engaged, and the doctrine that any one who is not against the Apostles is for them. But in truth both statements are perfectly true and perfectly harmonious. Our Lord's words about the Pharisees may have had an historical meaning, because that had been the course of things with those who had now shown themselves His enemies by the most atrocious calumny. They had begun by trying to ignore Him and remain neutral, and had been forced to take a part against Him of the utmost hostility. But they had been men in authority, to whom others looked for guidance, and of whom God expected that they should take a part entirely different from that which they did take, and for such men to hold back and say nothing, as had been the case at the first, was in fact to oppose Him. Pilate might have remained neutral if he had not been in authority, but

[1] St. Matt. xii. 30.

being in authority, he was, as we know, forced to act against our Lord if he would not openly take His part. But the exorcist of whom He is now speaking helped on the work of the Apostles without in any way opposing them, though he did not go so far as to assert that they alone had authority in the matter of casting out devils in the Name of our Lord. He was not against them and so he was for them. The two propositions are true, each in its own range of application.

We are also reminded by this incident of the exorcist of the anecdote in the Acts of the Apostles of the Jewish exorcists, who endeavoured to cast out devils by the invocation of the Name of our Lord. This case seems at first sight quite parallel to that before us. It is parallel in everything except in the bad faith of the exorcists mentioned in the Acts, and the good faith of the man of whom our Lord is speaking. In the case in the Acts,[2] the exorcists were Jews who did not believe in our Lord, but who, seeing the power of the Holy Name in the mouth of St. Paul, attempted to invoke over them 'that had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I conjure you by Jesus Whom Paul preacheth. But the wicked spirit answering said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaped upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.' For the devils know perfectly well whom they are to obey and whom not, who invoke our Lord's Name in good faith and who in bad. These men did not act from a desire to honour our Lord, but they thought they might use His Name against Himself,

[2] Acts xix. 13.

by drawing to themselves, who were opposed to St. Paul, a certain amount of credit by imitating Him in their exorcisms. They were like men who preach the Catholic faith for the sake of preventing others from joining the Catholic Church, on the ground that all it has to give can be had elsewhere.

There is also a famous passage of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians, in which he tells his friends that he rejoiced even when the Name of our Lord was preached out of contention and not sincerely, by persons who wished to add to His affliction as a prisoner.[3] It is not certain what this kind of preaching was. Some have thought that the Apostle means that the Name of our Lord, as preached by Him, was spread about by enemies who wished it thus to attract the attention of Nero, who might then be inclined to deal more severely with the Apostle. But in any case the language of St. Paul shows us that, in whatever way the Name of our Lord is made known, there may always be some good which may result from its publication, and this truth must be a great consolation to the Catholic teachers of the truth in our own day, when they see how many outside the Church, from whatever motive, are busy in spreading, at all events, some kind of knowledge of the true Catholic doctrine, some in simple good faith, like the man of whom our Lord spoke, some in great ignorance, and others, it must be feared, out of contention, of whom it cannot certainly be said that they cannot speak evil of the Church, which on the other hand they are the most active of all in reviling. The greatest calumnies against the Church that have been spread abroad in our time and country have been the work of men who have claimed to

[3] Philipp. i. 17.

teach or hold the whole Catholic truth. With regard to such men, we can see that the Apostle would have found, in his hopeful charity, some consolation in the thought that they at least make known to many, whom Catholic teachers cannot reach, fragments of the Catholic system. Such a fragment of the truth, deposited in a good and sincere heart, even by one who is himself an enemy, may be blessed by the mercy of God as the beginning of light to a soul which might otherwise never have come under its influence.

CHAPTER VII.

The greater in the Kingdom.

St. Matt. xviii. 1—14; St. Mark ix. 32—49; St. Luke ix. 46—48;
Story of the Gospels, §§ 86, 87.

After speaking on the question which had been asked Him by St. John in the name of the other disciples, our Lord went on, as it seems, without interrupting His discourse, to the kindred subject which was probably in His mind at the time, when, before the question of St. John, He had taken the child, embraced him, and said a few words about the blessing of those who should receive such in His Name. It may be considered that our Lord simply returns to the subject of which He was already speaking, and of which His Sacred Heart was now very full, for the sake of the Apostles. Or it may be thought that His words have some reference to the matter of the question itself which had been asked Him. For it may be that He looked on this man, who had been forbidden by the Apostles to cast out devils in His Name, as one who was in good faith and therefore might have been left alone, in the prospect of his being led, by the grace which he had hitherto followed faithfully, to a still more perfect intelligence concerning our Lord and His Church. In this case this man would not have wished any longer to take on himself the office of an exorcist without being, as we should say, in open communion

with the Apostolic body, and, far more than that, without being a close follower of our Lord Himself in every respect. For perhaps such persons, when it is safe to leave them alone, are better left alone, because there may be a danger of giving them some scandal if they are roughly and prematurely interfered with as by an act of authority. In this sense we may understand that the man in question represented a class of little ones, of whom great care must be taken, lest they should be scandalized. Or, as has been said, it may be better to understand the words which now follow about the scandalizing of little ones as continuing the main subject which our Lord had before Him from the beginning of this discourse.

Even then, there is some difficulty remaining as to the connection of the discourse. For it seems as if, when our Lord began, He had in His mind the instruction of the Apostles about the danger of ambition, rivalry, and contention, of which the first germs had been discernible in the conversation which they had held among themselves, and concerning which they had now been afraid to answer our Lord. It may be asked, what is the immediate connection between the contention or discussion, who should be the greater, and the giving scandal to little ones of which our Lord now proceeds to speak? It may be answered that our Lord might well foreknow that there was to be no more fruitful source of scandal in the Church, than the ambition, and rivalry, and contentiousness which might be from time to time prevalent among the ministers of the Christian sanctuary. Thus there may have been in His mind the clearest connection between the two subjects. The words which He had just uttered about the cup

of water given in His Name, would naturally call to His mind the little ones of His flock. For He had already used that image in His charge to these same Apostles, only, instead of speaking of them as the recipients of the charity of the cup of water, He had then spoken of the little ones as the recipients. Thus the phrase 'the little ones' might rise to His lips, and certainly it embraces, in its natural Christian signification, not simply children like the boy whom He had just taken and placed by His own side, but all those who, in faith, or in innocence, or in simplicity, or in their partial and imperfect knowledge of the truth or of their own duties, might fall under the general character of little ones. And the strong language which He now went on to use on the subject of scandal is easily accounted for, when we consider the immensity of that mischief which our Blessed Lord had then before His mind. The difficulty, about the connection of our Lord's words, thus resolves itself into the misery of our own very imperfect appreciation of the mischievousness and scandalousness of contentions among Apostolic men. If we perfectly understood the evils which these faults in her ministers entail on the Church, we should not require any explanation of the apparent difficulty of the connection of our Lord's words.

The passage begins by a statement of the danger incurred by those who give scandal of whatever kind. 'Whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones who believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' Then our Lord takes up some words which He had before used in the Sermon on the Mount, where He had been explaining the Christian meaning of the commandment which for-

bade adultery, and had added the strongest denunciation of the danger of admitting anything that might incline us to sin, doubtless with a special view to the extreme subtlety and malignity of dangers to purity. Here He speaks most generally, and the direct purpose of the words is changed from the subject of giving scandal to others who are little ones, to that of taking scandal or falling ourselves, in consequence of any softness in ridding ourselves of the occasion of evil. 'And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet to be cast into the Hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the Kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the Hell of fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. Every one shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt become unsavoury, wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you, and have peace among you.'

We may repeat on this passage, in the first place, that there is a transition in the words of our Lord from the subject of the giving of scandal to little ones, of whatever kind or degree, to that of taking scandal, or rather of allowing anything in our own lives and habits which may be to us an occasion of falling. There can be little doubt that this is the meaning of our Lord in the passage in the Sermon

on the Mount, from which the words about the hand and foot and eye are taken. He may not have precisely the same object in this passage. For He may be speaking of the things which are dangers to the servants of God in the discharge of their ministerial functions, such as temptations to ambition and the love of pre-eminence, rather than of the things which, in ordinary life, are the occasions of falls in the matter of purity. But it is at least clear that He speaks of occasions of falls to ourselves, rather than of occasions of scandal to others which may be found in our conduct. For the range of danger in the matter of scandal is very large and has many sides, and our Lord might not wish to let any occasion pass of inculcating the truth on this most momentous point. And, moreover, the things in which we are likely to give scandal to others are those as to which we yield too softly to temptations which beset ourselves, and lead us to indulge uncautiously some passion, or predilection, or ambition, or aversion, in short, some phase or form of self-love and self-seeking.

Our Lord had constantly in His Heart the case of the men who were at that very time doing so much harm to the souls of others, men who had not begun by full malignity in opposing Him and His teaching, men who had been placed by the Providence of His Father in the seat of authority and the chair of Moses, for the express purpose of helping those over whom they ruled, and who looked to them as guides, to embrace the sweet yoke and gentle burthens of the Gospel kingdom. The Scribes and Pharisees had gone astray just for the reason that they had not had the courage and wisdom to sacrifice themselves and their selfish objects of ambition to the service of God. Many of them were men of bad

lives, and may even have used their position to facilitate their indulgence in sensuality, as was the case with the sons of Eli. But their immediate cause of sin was their ambition. The time had not come for the denunciation of the woes these men were bringing on themselves, of which denunciation we shall have to speak a little later. But it was already in our Lord's Heart, and He also knew full well how it was to be in the Christian Church afterwards. We find an instance of this beginning of rivalry among the disciples of the Apostles in the state of the Church of Corinth to which St. Paul wrote, where men were calling themselves the disciples or followers and converts of this or that one among the teachers, and were encouraged as it seems by some of the latter in this beginning of division, which contained in itself so much mischief for the future if it were not immediately checked. It is not the plan of St. Paul to speak severely, but his Epistles to that Church are warnings and instructions to all time, both as to the dignity of the Christian ministry, and the immense evils which result whenever it even begins to lose its perfect spirit.

We may therefore understand this passage about scandal in connection with the main purpose of our Lord in the whole of this discourse or discourses, for we shall see reason for thinking that on this occasion He repeated twice over very nearly the same teaching after a very short interval of time. We must remember that up to the moment when these words were spoken, the disciples had not avowed to our Lord the subject of their conversation on the road to Capharnaum. He had asked them, and they had been ashamed to answer Him. In His sweet and gentle way, knowing their hearts, as St. Luke tell us,

He had called them to Him, and told them, that if any man desired to be first, he should be the last of all, and the servant of all. Then He had said no more. He had spoken by action, taking a child and setting him by Himself, in the midst of them, and embracing him. Then He had added the words about the blessing of receiving such a child in His name. He had let Himself be interrupted by the question of St. John about the prohibition of the man who had been found casting out devils in His Name, but He had returned to the former subject, only changing the form of His words from a recommendation of loving care for little ones to a warning against the danger of giving scandal to little ones. It is therefore as if He had said, without entering into the question as to who should be the greater, which was soon after to be put to Him directly, that what He wished them to occupy themselves about in their conversation, and in the thoughts and desires of their hearts, was, above all things, the immense blessing of being in any way ministers of help or salvation to those for whom He showed so much love, the little ones of the flock, and also the immense danger of giving anything like scandal to such, as was only too easy to any who did not most carefully rule themselves and restrain the instinctive movements of ambition, or any other passion, which might arise in their hearts. If their hearts were full of the true dignity and beauty, and also of the perils and dangers of the ministry, which was their work in the Kingdom of Heaven, there would be no room left for the aspirations of ambition, but only for that true and laudable ambition which desires to see the work of God for the good of souls prosper to the

utmost, whether in their own hands, or in the hands of any other whatsoever.

Nowhere can we find a better description of this true and honourable ambition than in such words as those of St. Paul to the Corinthian priests: 'Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed, but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as believers, and yet true, as unknown, and yet known, as dying, and behold we live, as chastised, and not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as needy, and yet enriching many, as having nothing, and yet possesing all things.'[1] It is evident that St. Paul would not pour himself out so readily as he does in these words, if his heart was not full to overflowing of the opportunities and responsibilities of the Christian ministry. He discloses here his own vigilance in seizing every opportunity of discharging his great duties with the utmost charity and edification. He does not speak about being first in all these things which he enumerates, he has no time for a comparison with others. The passage is a picture of his life, its external condition and its interior exercises of virtue. It is the positive side of the character and conduct of men who are incapable of giving scandal or yielding to temptations, even from things dearest to them, because they are all on

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 3—10.

fire with what he elsewhere calls the 'charity of Christ.'

Elsewhere St. Paul dwells on the privations and mortifications of the Apostolic life, by means of which he and his brethren were made what they were. 'Even unto this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labour, working with our own hands, we are reviled, and we bless, we are persecuted, and we suffer it, we are blasphemed, and we entreat, we are made the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now.'[2] And again: 'In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not distressed, we are straitened, but are not destitute, we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken, we are cast down, but we perish not, always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal bodies.'[3] On the occasion on which these Epistles to the Corinthians were written, the Apostle had to deal with mischiefs among the Christian priests which were very similar to those which might have followed among the Apostles, if our Lord had not given them the lesson and warnings contained in this passage of St. Matthew, and in this way we may illustrate the words of the Master by those of His faithful servant. These and other passages of St. Paul form a grand commentary on the words of our Lord here. When our Lord spoke, the idea of the Christian ministry and pastoral office was only in germ in the minds of the Apostles. It was a new thing in the world, as new as the doctrine of the Cross. St. Paul shows us to what it grew in the minds and hearts of the Apostles, and he has handed it on to the Church of

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 11—18. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 8—10.

all ages. But all that he says may be traced to these discourses of our Lord in Galilee, with their three or four fundamental ideas—the dignity of souls as representing God and Himself, the enormous danger and fatal easiness of scandal, the love of the Good Shepherd, and the will of the Father that no one of the little ones should be lost.

It may perhaps be thought that the words used by our Lord, which are quoted from the Sermon on the Mount, as has been said, and especially those which are here added to the quotation about the hand and the eye, namely, the thrice-repeated description of the worm that does not die, and the fire that is not extinguished, taken from the Prophet Isaias,[4] seem to point to some more gross and general dangers than those which might beset the Apostles and their successors in the sacred ministry for the benefit of souls. Still we must remember that those who have received the commission of the Apostles are bound, at the risk of salvation itself, to labour in that work, as St. Paul says, 'Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel,' and, moreover, that indifference to the dangers of the peculiar calling which God has given them may lead such men directly, and with no long interval of declension, to the very same sins which beset the commonest of mankind, and are the most universal causes of ruin. And it is at least evident that the practical doctrine which is here laid down is the necessity of the most watchful mortification of self for those who have the commission of which our Lord seems certainly to be speaking, if it is to be discharged without hurting others. This seems to be the lesson of the concluding words, which have in them no small difficulty on any other supposition.

[4] Isaias lxvi. 24.

'For every one shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt.' Our Lord seems to mean that something of the fire of mortification is necessary for every one, and that the fire of mortification is a happy exchange for the unquenchable fire of Hell, of which He has made mention. Even the sacrifices offered to God required salt to make them acceptable, and as it were savoury, in the eyes of Him to Whom they were offered. The salting with fire must signify the practice of continual self-restraint, which may in certain cases and emergencies lead to the cutting off of the hand or the foot, or the plucking out of the eye. And the sacrifice thus prepared, the service thus offered to God, required the salt of discretion, prudence, and charity, to season it and make it acceptable.

It is this exquisite charity and prudence which might perhaps have been wanting in the prohibition to the exorciser of which St. John had told our Lord, as in the proposal of which we hear at a later time, made by the same Apostle and his brother St. James, to call down fire from Heaven to destroy the city of the Samaritans which had refused them hospitality on their way to Jerusalem.[5] It would be the want of this which might lead in many cases to the scandal of little ones. It would certainly altogether evaporate in men who were actuated by ambition, jealousies, rivalries, and the like. Their souls could not be the homes of any of the more delicate and sensitive spiritual graces. The slightest admixture of selfishness degrades the soul, makes it gross, heavy, dull, hard, like a leaden and frozen soil, in which no flowers thrive. Thus it is that our Lord is so anxious at the very first manifestation of such

[5] St. Luke ix. 54.

feelings to root them out at once from the hearts of the Apostles.

'Salt is good, but if the salt become unsavoury, wherewith will you season it?' He seems again to go back to the words which He had used in the Sermon on the Mount, thus reminding the Apostles of what He had then said to them. He does not repeat, however, the latter part of the sentence, 'It is then good for nothing, but to be cast down and trodden upon by men.' Our Blessed Lord speaks here with very great gentleness and forbearance, though it would indeed have been true, that if they had given way to this rising spirit of ambition the former words might have been most applicable to them. He only says, 'Have salt in you, and have peace among you.' The salt of discretion and charity is to be in their own hearts, and then the result will be that there will be mutual harmony and peace in the whole community. Thus the summing up of this short discourse, as it is given us by St. Mark, sufficiently connects the beginning of the conversation with its close, showing that our Lord had in His mind the same object all through. That object was to turn their thoughts away from all foolish and disturbing curiosity concerning the relative eminence of the various members of the Apostolic company in point of rank, to the serious intelligence and consideration of the wonderful greatness of the work which they all and each had to do, the singleness of purpose, the self-abasement and self-sacrifice which it required, and the immense dangers by which it might be beset, both to their own souls, in the first instance, and then, in consequence, to the souls of those for whom they were to labour with all the devotion of which He speaks presently in the words

about the love of the shepherd for the sheep which had been lost. To bring home to them more completely these truths, He had already spoken of the reception even of one little child as the reception of Himself and of His Heavenly Father, and on the other hand, He had brought in, three times over, the terrible words of the Prophet about the undying worm of conscience and the interminable fires of Hell. It seems, however, that He was not even yet fully understood by them, for the question of which they had been afraid to tell Him, as having been raised among themselves, was almost immediately afterwards put to Him by them in so many words. They probably did not understand the exquisite and deep teaching He had been imparting to them, and thought that they might naturally speculate, as they had been speculating, and that He would answer them in a word. St. Matthew relates to us the question and our Lord's answer, which, as will be seen, is in many respects, a repetition of what He had already said, with the addition of certain most precious words which had not found a place in the former discourse.

'At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who, thinkest Thou, is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?' These English words hardly give the full force of the original Greek, which might more accurately be rendered, 'Who, *then*, shall be the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?' It is as if the disciples had made up their minds to have the question settled for them once for all, perhaps thinking that our Lord might deem it well to put the matter beyond all doubt, and so preclude the way for future discussions or speculations. But what they really needed was not the designation of any one particular

Apostle as their ruler or leader, or as nearest to our Lord in authority or dignity. As long as they had Himself with them, there was no need for that, and if there was no need, then the discussion was positively harmful for them, as an indulgence of curiosity, which always dissipates and disturbs the soul. What they needed was the enlightenment of their minds on the previous question, in what it was that the greatness and eminence in the Kingdom of Heaven was to consist. Our Lord answered them by a repetition of the gracious action which He had used before, to signify what He meant without directly proclaiming it. 'And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set Him in the midst of them, and said, Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' The mere question, He seems to say, which you ask Me, shows how utterly blind you are to the work to which you are called, its responsibilities and dangers. You are thinking and talking about the greater and the less in the Kingdom, and now know that you shall not enter into that Kingdom in any position at all, unless you be converted and become as this child. And from this follows another truth, the direct answer to their question. 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven.' He uses the word 'greater' of true greatness, though perhaps they had used it in the sense of superiority in dignity, authority, rank, and the like, which was what was in their mind. But our Lord's thoughts concerning greatness were different from theirs, and He meant in the word great at least to include sanctity and perfection. The great positions of authority in the earthly king-

dom are not always meted out to the holiest. But it is also true that humility is the most requisite of all graces for those who have to rule, as ambition and pride are the most vital disqualifications for such.

The answer of our Lord, therefore, put an end at once to all the questionings of ambition. There could not be even an entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven without that virtue of humility which abhors all elevation, and when they were once admitted to the Kingdom, the prizes there could only be won by ever greater and greater self-humiliation. The more they would fly from honours and dignities, the more they would have them, the more they sought them in heart, the further would they be from attaining them. This was the first entirely new teaching which our Lord gave them on this occasion. Before He had said, that if any man desired to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all, words which might have sounded almost as if they were a threat of humiliation as a chastisement for ambition. Now it is explained that it is humiliation itself which is true greatness, and the greater the humility the loftier the greatness. And in truth, greatness is not measured by office or positions of authority, for which the holiest of men are sometimes unfit, as in the case of St. Peter Celestine, or sometimes debarred by Providence, as in the case of St. John of the Cross, and numberless others. For in the sense of power and commission, our Lord said that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, the ministry of the Church, was greater than St. John Baptist.

Our Lord next repeats in short words the two main propositions concerning the treatment of little ones which He had before delivered. 'And he that shall receive one such little child in My Name re-

ceiveth Me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea.' This seems to have been a punishment used in the East for the gravest crimes. St. Jerome tells us that these words may have been meant to apply to the Apostles themselves. For, if they had continued in the temper generated by ambition and rivalry, they might have given great scandal to many of the faithful, seeing the leaders of the Church contending one with another. And certainly it has been so in history. There have been no greater and more lasting scandals in the history of the Church, than those which have been the results of ambition among the ministers of the altar. There have been great miseries in consequence of their worldliness, or sensuality, or love of riches. But perhaps these have not done so much harm to souls as their rivalries in grasping power, their ambition to be greatest in authority, dignity, work, reputation, honour, fame, and success, 'the last infirmity of noble mind.'

The enormous calamities to which the Church was subjected at the time of the so-called Reformation, may be traced to the great scandal of the schism in the Papacy, when, without any corruption of morals or doctrine, the prelates of the Roman Court were divided against the lawful successor of St. Peter, and carried their revolt so far as to set up a whole succession of Antipopes. The schism left an almost indelible stain on the Holy See, notwithstanding the many virtues, the devotion and learning and holy zeal, and the like, which were to be found in both camps. The great troubles of the Church in the ensuing centuries had mostly their source there. But the schism

in the Papacy was one among a great number of similar though minor scandals, or causes of scandal, in almost every generation, the mischief of which abundantly explains the strong words of our Lord which follow. 'Woe to the world because of scandals! for it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.' The woe which is here denounced on the world may be understood in either one of two ways. For it may be meant that scandals will do the most immense injuries to mankind, by means of the sins into which men are led thereby, and which lower the common level of virtue and alter the prevailing standard of right and wrong, in a way which grievously affects the whole of society, morally and socially. And it may also be meant that the Providence of God in the government of the world will be, as it were, obliged to be constantly sending chastisements upon nations and communities, and the world at large, in order to vindicate His own justice and set a public brand on the sins which call so loudly to Heaven for vengeance. In either meaning is contained a very large range of matter for thought and meditation, and the history of the world, of nations, and especially of Christian nations, can never be rightly understood until the consequences and chastisements of scandals, in His Divine government of the world, are allowed for and duly estimated. There is never a time in the history of society when there are not some great false principles as to the toleration of what is vicious and wicked, which prevail and affect even the better portion of mankind. For many carelessly accept them as legitimate because they are traditionally established, or enforced by present fashion and custom. And the world is continually

punished by plagues, wars, famines, and other external calamities, in order that the evil that has been done may be expiated, and the minds of men directed to the removal of the scandals which are so offensive in the eye of Heaven.

When our Lord says that it must needs be that scandals come, He does not of course mean that there is any natural necessity for them, or that God has decreed that they should be. For there can be no scandal without the deliberate and free action of the human will, in the person or persons who cause the scandal, and the wills of men are never constrained by God to do evil, nor is any one held guilty for what he has not done with freedom and deliberation. The necessity of which our Lord speaks is, in the first instance, the result of the weakness, the blindness, and the malevolence of men, who are prone to what is evil from their youth up, and who live in a world which inherits and propagates the evil maxims and habits of former generations, adding to them from time to time its own new inventions and developments of evil. Thus it was certain that, unless God interfered with some preventive action which might violate the freedom of the will, sin would find its way into the world if the time of probation was to be prolonged, as it found its way into Heaven itself among creatures not yet confirmed in grace, in reward for their faithfulness in their appointed trial. In this sense things must be because they are certain to be. It is certain that even the just cannot altogether escape the falling into imperfections and lighter sins, unless they are prevented by some special magnificence of grace, as was the case with the Blessed Mother of God. Our lot is cast in a world in which we have all very great influence, for

good or for evil, one on another, in which we have to learn one from another what is right and what is wrong, in which the force of example and of the opinion of others is very great, in which temptations are abundant, and the influence of temporal things and matters of sense very much greater, naturally, than that of the truths of faith and the principles of the invisible world. Moreover, we are in this world for the express purpose of being tried, though assisted with grace if we are faithful, and we are constantly assailed by beings far more powerful by nature than ourselves, whose great aim and delight is to lead us into delusion and persuade us to sin. In such a world and under such conditions of life, it is morally impossible that there should not be numberless instances of scandal. It is not naturally necessary, but it is reasonably inevitable. It could not be altogether prevented, unless God were to alter the conditions of our present state of existence.

But God permits no evil in His Kingdom except for purposes of good, and thus He permits scandal for the trial and perfection and crowning of His elect. Like all other evils which He permits, it works for His glory in the virtues of the saints, who are made able to resist and overcome and win for themselves rewards throughout all eternity which otherwise would not be theirs. Thus there is this kind of necessity also about the existence of scandals, that they are what God has resolved to permit for the sake of turning them to good by using them for the perfection of the elect. The cruel treatment and persecution which His servants receive, and which seem to proclaim to the world that God has no care for those who serve Him, or for the maintenance of justice, tend to make the virtues of those servants

more perfect and more conspicuous, and they also lead, in due time, to public and striking chastisement of the wicked. Thus they give occasion to a fresh imitation and reflection of the character of our Lord, in His humiliations and sufferings, on the part of the saints, and they lead to the ever-recurring manifestation of His justice in the government of the world by vindicating right and punishing wrong. The scandals caused by bad example, which are the most numerous and destructive of all, of which our Lord seems to be more particularly speaking in this place, and which are more and more mischievous in proportion to the rank, dignity, position, or office of the persons in whom they are seen, are spurs to the virtues and exertions of the saints, whose business it is to shine like lights in the evil world. They force them to prayer and to the practice of heroic virtues and of the most exact obedience to the Law of God for the sake of reparation, to the organization of religious communities in which He may be perfectly served, and to all the great works of Christian zeal.

Other scandals which flow from the teaching of false doctrine, and which are innumerable, give occasion for the manifestation of the loyalty and devotion of the faithful, for the vindication of the Catholic doctrine by the doctors and saints of the Church, and for the formal definitions of her Councils and Pontiffs. 'For there must be also heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you.'[6] Thus the great treasures of the doctrine of the Church have been unfolded, and are still being unfolded, in considerable measure under the pressure of the opposing forms of falsehood which have risen

[6] 1 Cor. xi. 19.

up, from time to time, in the course of the wanderings of the human intelligence over the field of Divine truth. Beside this source of scandal, there is another very fruitful cause of evil in the mistakes and imprudences and negligences of good men, especially when in authority. Our Lord permits this for their greater humiliation and for the trial of souls very dear to Him. A man's character is that part of his being of which he has often the least consciousness, and, when he is in authority and in constant contact with a thousand persons and affairs, his faults of character, narrowness, timidity, jealousy, precipitateness, and the like, may sometimes affect the progress of the Church in his own country for a whole generation, and long after. The world is, in truth, full of snares, according to the vision of St. Antony, and the time will never come when these evils are altogether uprooted.

Thus much, then, may be said, as to the necessity of scandals coming, of which our Lord here speaks. We need not add many words as to the strong denunciation of punishment on the man by whom the scandal comes. Although scandal may sometimes be given unwittingly, and by men who have no evil intention, still even in those cases it is something diametrically hostile to the work of God in the world, and to the interests of His Kingdom. He it is Who has made scandal possible by placing men in society, and giving to each one what the Scripture calls a commandment concerning their neighbours, mutual duties, and far penetrating influences. Our dependence one on another gives its power to the evil tongue, or the licentious example, or the personal influence which enchains the will by love or by fear, when the conscience is still inclined

to resist. It is because we live so much by faith one in another, that we are so liable to be led astray to our destruction by the false statement, the historical calumny, the garbled quotation, the crafty perversion of facts, the insinuation of motives. The temper of children is inculcated in the Church, and it is this temper that is taken advantage of by those who mislead the little ones, who are still uppermost in the mind of our Lord. Moreover, He was speaking to His Apostles, and therefore He must have had in His thoughts the peculiar responsibilities of their great commission in the Church, in consequence of which they, or those who came after them, might be guilty of the sin of scandal, not only by what they said and taught, but also by what they did not say and teach. Who shall count up, even in thought, the effects of omission of duties and neglect of opportunities, on the part of Apostolic men?

It runs generally through the whole doctrine on this subject, that a sin committed in consequence of scandal is to be visited on him who commits it, and also on him who has caused it to be committed. Of course this is especially true of those who are put in authority and who have the commission to teach, and the punishment is to fall on them when they have failed in their duty of warning others, as well as when they have positively taught what is evil. The sentence is repeated more than once in the passage in the Prophet Ezechiel, where this matter is handled. 'If when I say to the wicked thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his evil way and live, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand. But if thou give warning to the wicked, and he be not converted from

his wickedness and from his evil way, he indeed shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy own soul.'[7] If silence and forbearance in the case of evil is severely to be punished, it is natural to expect great chastisements of those who make themselves positively instruments of evil. The first to give scandal was the evil one in the garden of Paradise, when he said to Eve, 'you shall not surely die.' And it may truly be said that all who give scandal are the instruments and servants of the evil one, and that their work in the world is nothing else but a continuation of his.

Our Lord, therefore, now repeats what He had before said as to the danger of giving scandal. 'And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee, having one eye, to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire.' He omits on this occasion the words which He had before quoted from Isaias about the undying worm and the unquenchable flame. But He adds instead a passage which expresses very forcibly the motive already spoken of the zeal for souls, by which He seeks to supplant in the minds of the Apostles the evil spirit of rivalry, or at least of curiosity about the pre-eminence of this or that one among them in the future Kingdom. This, like the passage about the woe to the world because of scandals, is an addition to the former discourse on which this one is in general founded. The first thing which He now says in this connection is that the little

[7] Ezech. iii. 18, 19.

ones are watched over with great care by the Angels, who always see the face of the Father Who is in Heaven. 'Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their Angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven.'

There seems no reason for doubting that these words about the Angels who always see the face of the Father Who is in Heaven, signify that this is the reason why we are to take heed not to despise any single one of the little ones. The reason is, that their Angels have the privilege of immediate access to God, and will be made enemies by any who despise the little ones. Such an injury puts in exercise their prayers and complaints to His justice, against those who despise and consequently neglect them, as they are ready to move Him also to mercy on those who care for them and help them. Thus in the case of the wicked man mentioned in the passage lately quoted from Ezechiel, the Guardian Angel of the person warned, or not warned, by the prophet, might either represent, as an excuse for his charge, that he had not been warned, or as a reason for a reward to the prophet, that he had been warned. Thus the Angels are not actuated by desire of revenge, when they represent to God the neglect or contempt of their charges on the part of those who are bound to labour for them and care for them. They plead that neglect and contempt as an excuse for the little ones, who might not have gone astray if other measures had been used in their regard, and this simple pleading for the neglected souls is a terrible accusation against those who are guilty of the neglect, being themselves bound to diligence and charity towards them. This then is the first reason given

by our Lord in this place for the care of the little ones. They have most powerful friends and protectors who always see the face of the Father. They would not have these unless they were worth very much indeed in the estimation of God Himself, unless they were very dear to Him Who has created them after His own image.

Thus much might be said of them, even if they had no part in the still greater work of God, the work of His redeeming love, which goes beyond even the love of the Creator. But our Lord adds this also: 'For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.' He does not mean that the guardianship of the Angels over the little ones is on account of the coming of the Son of Man on His mission of salvation, but that that mission of His gives the little ones a fresh dignity and a fresh claim on the consideration of those who understand His character, and who even share and inherit the work of redemption which He began. Thus the little ones have a dignity, on account of their relation to God, the Creator and the Judge, and also a further dignity on account of their relation to God, the Redeemer. And then He puts this into a parable, of which, as we shall see, He was very fond, because it represents Himself in the character of the Good Shepherd. 'What think you? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and goeth to seek that which is gone astray? And if it be that he find it, Amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father Who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' Where there is for

the time greater danger, there there is always greater anxiety, and more urgent exertion, as in the care of a sheep which has gone astray as compared with that of the remainder of the flock, which is safe in the fold. Those which are safe can be left, and the one which is astray must be sought. And when the search has proved successful, there is greater joy over the recovered one than over the rest which have not had to be recovered, for in that case there has been special risk, particular exertion, continued uncertainty, the excitement of a search and a pursuit, and then the final achievement of success at the cost of labour.

All these enhancing circumstances, our Lord tells us, are to be found in the case of the little ones of whom He is speaking. He does not speak of children alone, for all those who are either astray or not safe within the fold, are the subjects of this anxiety and of this labour on His part. And He wishes all such to be the objects of the loving labours and zealous exertions of the Apostles and of all who are to take their place in the Church. They are not dearer than others, but there is more tender anxiety about them on account of their greater danger. This is enough to make them the darling pre-occupation of the Sacred Heart. He adds, in the last place, that even His own love for them is inspired by the special care and predilection of the Eternal Father for them. 'Even so, it is not the will of your Father Who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' The Heart of our Lord learns Its special devotion from the will of the Father, and the hearts of apostolic men are to catch their inspiration from the Heart of our Lord.

We seem to be a long way, with these words and

thoughts before us, from the immediate occasion of this outpouring of the affections of the Sacred Heart with regard to the little ones of the flock. But this is in truth the answer of our Lord to the questionings of His disciples among themselves who should be greater. It was, as has been said, a question which it was not wise or decent for them to move. At the best it was a foolish piece of curiosity, which could only serve to dissipate their minds and take them away from the serious work of preparation for the apostolic ministry, and especially for the coming trial of the Passion. It is well known how mischievous any curiosity is for all the exercises of the spiritual life. It is inconsistent with interior peace, and therefore with the spirit of prayer. It is like a newspaper or a novel as a preparation for Mass or meditation or office. But in the case before us it was far more than a bit of mischievous dissipation in its effects on the minds of the Apostles. It stirred the depths of their hearts with the movements of ambition and jealousy, and it confirmed the false conception from which it sprung, as to the nature of the Kingdom itself, of its work, its order, its prizes, and dignities. The Kingdom which He came to found was indeed to have its external organization, its subordination of officers and rulers and subjects. There were to be some who were to occupy the highest external rank, there were to be places of honour in it which were to be given to those for whom they were prepared by the Father. With all this the disciples had nothing to do but to wait for the declaration of the Father's will at the time chosen by Himself. There was indeed a kind of rudeness and impertinence in peering into arrangements of Providence in these matters, which belong to the secret wisdom, the free

choice and counsels of God, as to all matters of personal vocation. And it is for this reason, as well as that of the mischief which results to souls when curiosity is indulged in to any serious extent, that speculations of this kind are so much discouraged in religious communities and by the masters of the spiritual life. But our Lord, in His extreme tenderness and consideration, did not rebuke them so strongly as He had rebuked St. Peter, in a somewhat similar case, when he had taken on himself to remonstrate with his Master about the future Passion. He evaded the direct question. For what they practically wanted Him to tell them was whether Peter or John or some one else was to be first among them in honour and dignity, as the High Priest was first at Jerusalem. As to this foolish question our Lord said nothing, and the only rebuke which He administered to them was contained in the positive and most salutary teaching about the necessity of humility for themselves, and, in the second place, the immense importance of the work to which they were all alike called.

It is in this that our Lord's treatment of the disease which had begun to work in their souls consisted. The Kingdom of God was to be a kingdom founded on humility, built up in humility, and crowned by humility. It was to be a kingdom which had an immense work to accomplish, the salvation of the world. The least and weakest of those for whom its labours were to be spent were immensely dear to God. Those who received them received Himself and the Father Who sent Him. Where was there room for discussions about the dignity of the labourers, when the very poorest child in the Church represented our Lord and His Eternal

Father? The work they had to do was moreover most delicate and dangerous, a work in which it was easy to make mistakes, to fail even unwittingly, to do immense harm even without intending to do anything but good. It touched the spiritual issues on which the eternity of souls depends, it had to be accomplished in a short time, in the face of most watchful enemies, and at tremendous risks. The will of the Father was involved in its success. It was the very motive which had brought the Eternal Son down from Heaven, which had governed the whole economy of His life of toil and suffering, a life which was to be soon ended by the Sacrifice of the Cross. The souls whose salvation was at stake were watched over by angels who could feel the very slightest wrong or neglect or contempt with which their charges were treated, and who would let no indifference to their welfare pass without the liveliest protest before the throne of God. No fate could be worse than that which would fall on those who injured the little ones of the flock, as to their eternal interests, and injured indeed those interests might be, by the ambitions and contentions of the servants employed to aid them.

Could the hearts and minds of the Apostles once burn with true ardour for the souls over whom they were all called to watch, and take in fully the overwhelming importance of their work, there would be no room left in them for the trivial questionings with which they had been occupying themselves. Thus then it seems to have been our Lord's object at this time to put these thoughts before them, not without the salutary accompaniment of the solemn warnings of danger to themselves which are here added, rather than to meet their question in any other way either of direct answer or of sterner reproof. As far as can

be gathered, there was no more discussion of this particular question of primacy among them for some considerable time, though it came up again in the request of the mother of the two brothers, James and John, the holy Salome, that her children might have the promise of sitting on our Lord's right and left hand in His Kingdom. Then again our Lord baffled the question, and turned the thoughts of the ambitious brethren most forcibly to the labours and dangers and sufferings of their calling. Far enough, indeed, even then, they were, from the idea of their office which we find, as has been said, in St. Paul, as in the passage in which he compares himself and his brethren to the combatants in the arena who had no issue from it but by death. 'For I think that God hath set forth us Apostles, the last, as it were men appointed unto death, because we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honourable, but we without honour. Even unto this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode. And we labour, working with our own hands. We are reviled, and we bless, we are persecuted, and we suffer it, we are ill-spoken of, and we entreat, we are made the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all even till now.'[8]

[8] 1 Cor. iv. 9—12.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fraternal Correption.

St. Matt. xviii. 15—35 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 88.

ST. MATTHEW, whom we have been following in the last part of the preceding chapter, subjoins to his account of the last discourse of our Lord on the subject of the reverence for little ones, a passage of considerable length. This may be a narrative of what occurred immediately after the conclusion of that discourse, and indeed have grown out of it, or else an account of some teaching of our Lord's which the Evangelist considers as connected therewith by the similarity of the subject matter. The whole of this passage breathes the spirit of this period of the ministry of our Lord, before He left Galilee, the records of which are confined in the main to instructions given to the Apostles. The precepts wich are here laid down presuppose the establishment of the Church as a living community, with its governors as well as its ordinary members under them. They presuppose the authority of the body over its members, as well as the mutual relations between the members themselves. They presuppose the great privileges which belong to the Church, and the great law of charity as obtaining over all.

The first part of this remarkable passage contains our Lord's precepts with reference to the great duty of fraternal correption. Of this duty it has been

said by one of the old Saints, that its neglect does as much harm to the Christian Kingdom as the habitual violation of the sixth Commandment in respect of the sin of fornication. Such a statement implies that the perfect observance of this precept, if it were possible to ensure its perfect observance, would be as beneficial to Christian society as the perfect observance of the law of purity. And great as is the contrast between the moral effects of the perfect observance of that law on the one hand, and of the habitual license in this regard which is practically the law of the lives of multitudes on the other, it is perhaps not greater than the contrast between what might be in Christian society, if the rule of fraternal correption were duly observed, and the actual state of things as to charity which is the result of the substitution for that law of the practical system of universal criticism on the lives one of another, which actually prevails in the world which calls itself Christian, a system which supports a whole army of collectors of gossip and newspaper writers, besides furnishing the materials for most of the conversation of the lives of thousands. Unhappily, the doctrine now before us requires a state of things among Christians as regards charity, humility, patience, and self-restraint, such as is not always to be found within the walls of the cloister itself, though the graces of the Gospel are amply and superabundantly sufficient to produce it throughout the whole mass of society. The precepts themselves breathe the intense tenderness of the charity of our Lord, and show moreover the extent to which it is His desire to trust the greatest powers to the Church as such, and make all His children helpers one to the other, in the attainment of perfection and con-

summate virtue and charity. They show us thus what a heaven on earth He has created for us in the Church, if we will but correspond to the graces with which He has been so careful to furnish us.

'But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and publican.' Some writers have understood this precept as applying in general to the charitable correction of sinners, whether their sin be against ourselves or against other persons or the law of God in general. It has even been thought that the words 'offend against thee,' mean 'offend in thy sight, or with thy knowledge.' But the remainder of the passage seems to contradict this interpretation, and when St. Peter at the end is introduced as asking how often he is to forgive his brother, the question seems to be connected with this precept about the correction of a brother, and to suppose that the offence here spoken of is personal against ourselves. But it may, in any case, be concluded that the obligation of correption in general is not limited to offences against ourselves, but is naturally extended to all offences of which we are witnesses, whether against ourselves or not, unless, as is the case in a great number of instances, there are particular reasons which militate against the execution of the rule. But our Lord is evidently speaking in the first instance of the method which is to be pursued in the case of those who find

themselves injured or offended by one of their brethren.

He lays down certain stages which are to succeed in due order in the redressing of the wrong which any one may have received. Such wrong is a calamity to the person who inflicts it, as well as to him on whom it is inflicted. The charity which we owe one to another obliges us to look on the brother who has done the wrong as we should regard him if he had fallen under some attack of sickness, or had made some great mistake in the management of his own interests. In such cases he would naturally have a right to any charitable assistance which it might be within our power to render to him, while at the same time we are not bound to forego the redress to which we have ourselves a right. In the first place the injured person is to go and remonstrate with the injurer alone. This is an exercise of Christian charity, and must be done with all the simplicity and tenderness and brotherly love which the circumstances require. It is to be done privately, for we are not to spread the knowledge of the wrong further than is necessary. Our Lord's words imply that we are not to publish the wrong in the first instance. His desire is that there may be on each side an exercise of charity. It stands to reason, therefore, that if it cannot be done with charity on both sides, it should be omitted or deferred until there be no angry feeling or chance of a further break, which would make matters worse. But in many cases, between Christian men, there is great hope of the happy result which our Lord intends. We are all immensely blind to our own defects and defaults, and it is the greatest of mercies and charities to show us, in a kind and loving way, what

is the character of our actions in the eyes of others. This first measure of charity gives an opportunity of redressing the evil at once, in the case where there has been simple mistake or misconception or the indulgence of self-interest, in some degree or kind, in which the person concerned has not erred with full advertence, from want of due consideration, or under some false impression of his own rights, which impression can be removed. Except in the case in which such remonstrance is clearly hopeless, this kind of correction is the due right of the person who has done the wrong, as well of him who has received it.

Our Lord speaks as if the children of His Church were generally animated by right and just and charitable feelings, and it is clear what an immense provision for good is here ordained by Him. The blessing falls on him who receives the injury, and not less on him who inflicts it. If a man makes a mistake in his art or business, he is deeply grateful to the friend who corrects him and preserves him from future errors of the same kind. And, on the other hand, a man under such circumstances is dealt with most unkindly and uncharitably, if he is left to make himself ridiculous or inefficient in any work he undertakes, in consequence of his uncorrected ignorance. It is the same therefore with the man who has done some moral wrong. On the other hand, if God gives him the grace to accept charitably and intelligently the correction he receives, his gain is immense. We can all remember how corrections, whether as to matters of knowledge or matters of conduct, which have been given to us by friends in a kind manner, have been the most profitable services that we have ever received in the whole of our lives.

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They are seldom forgotten, for they have brought upon us a light concerning ourselves which we had not before, and which makes an impression on us for the very reason that it has come to us from without, and by way of charitable correction. The lessons which we thus learn are the most powerful and the most cherished of all that we have ever received. It is natural to think that there is a special grace from God, Who loves charity, to help both him who corrects and him who is corrected. But this is not all. Our Lord says, 'If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.' He counts it, perhaps, a comparatively slight benefit that the complaining person has gained the redress of the grievance, whatever that may have been. He has gained far more than the redress of the wrong, for he has gained back his brother. This may mean, not only that he has brought his brother from the error into which he had fallen, which was more or less sinful or displeasing to God, more or less injurious to the Church and to himself, more or less contrary to charity and, so far, tending to the dissolution of society. More than that, it means that the person who has happily and successfully brought his brother round to peace and justice, has made his brother far more to him than he could have been before. He has won a brother in a sense in which he had not a brother before.

There has been between them a fresh exercise of great charity, first in the correption and the complaint, secondly in the manner in which the correption has been received, again in the manner in which the injury has been repaired, and again in the charity in which the reparation has been accepted, and still further again in the new relation which has been

created between the two persons who have thus come into contact with one another. They are in future bound one to the other by new ties of kindness and love, while, as far as the knowledge of the circumstances is spread, there is fresh edification and joy in the Church, on account of the victory of charity. A whole swarm of beautiful affections and relations are thus called into play, which remind us to some extent of the joyous words of St. Paul when he had had to chide the clergy of Corinth, and had elicited from them so many holy affections, that his sorrow for having had to grieve them was turned into joy. 'I am glad,' he says, 'not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto penance, for you were made sorrowful according to God, that you might suffer damage from us in nothing. . . . For behold, this self same thing that you were made sorrowful according to God, how great carefulness doth it work in you, yea defence, yea indignation, yea fear, yea desire, yea zeal, yea revenge.'[1]

And, in simple truth, some of the most beautiful friendships and alliances in the world have been those which have been founded on this exercise of charity. For our Lord blesses the use of the holy means which He has provided in the community which is His Kingdom. And, if the angels are knit together by the mutual enlightenment and other offices of love which they exercise one to another, the children of the Church have opportunities of founding their mutual love on the basis of forgiveness of injuries. This is a circumstance which does not exist in the commonwealth of heaven, and which makes the love which we can bear one to another

[1] Cor. vii. 9—11.

more like the love of God and our Lord Himself. In this first measure, therefore, of the fraternal pacification which our Lord has ordained, we have a most fruitful source of grace and joy and charity, and an exercise of virtue which brings down immense blessings and rejoices extremely the Heart of our Lord. And in many cases in which this measure might have been adopted and yet has been omitted, it is easy to see how much is lost to the glory of God, the satisfaction of our Lord, as well as to the souls concerned in the particular question. It cannot be doubted that it is often difficult to use it. But there are many more cases in which it could have been employed, in which some animosity, or shyness, or slothfulness, may have operated in thus frustrating the desire of our Lord.

The second measure of this redress is to be found in the use of the natural respect which Christians must owe to the judgment of their brethren, when represented to them with fairness, kindness, and moderation in all charity. 'And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand.' The presence of one or two witnesses must have the effect, in the first place, of supporting the complaint of injury. For it might be thought that the person injured was not a fair judge in his own case, whereas the others, called in by way of witness, are free from all prejudice or interest in the matter, and may fairly be supposed to represent the general verdict of public Christian opinion. But as yet there is nothing penal or judicial about the remonstrance, for such weapons as the action of authority are not to be called into play until they are needed. The having recourse to this step of

the one or two witnesses, is a kind of appeal to authority, but it is rather at first the authority of the influence of good men. In many cases, where we are able to bring in the influence of men of some distinction and personal weight in the Church, it is certain to have greater effect than the remonstrance of the injured person.

In this second stage of correption our Lord has again provided for another great exercise of His favourite virtue of charity. For it is an act of charity to take the pains to procure the interference of men who will be respected and listened to, before proceeding to any stronger step. It is an act of charity on the part of the persons who are called in, because they put themselves to the pain of remonstrating in a matter in which they are not personally concerned at the risk of some odium and perhaps trouble to themselves. They are borne on by the instincts of charity, which will never let the Christian rest where there is an opportunity of healing differences and redressing wrongs. And an opportunity is also offered to the person who has done the wrong of yielding before the influence of Christian love, and with less of self sacrifice and humiliation than if he had given way on the remonstrance of the complaining person. The presence of the one or two others is a species of intervention in the name of the community in general, and would make it easier and more graceful for him to give way. If he did so it might be set down to a love for the general peace, which must be dear to the heart of every Christian.

'And if he will not hear them, tell the Church.' As it would not be possible, or very charitable, to inform the whole assembly of the faithful, either collectively or one by one, of the complaint which had to be

made, it is clear that the reference must be to the person or persons who are the representative rulers of the Church in any particular case. Private wrongs would hardly be the fitting subjects for the convocation of large councils, nor would such bodies be the most fitting judges on matters of detail. But it is not only the practical difficulty of the supposition, which makes us reject at once the hypothesis of the decision being referred to any general assembly, so much as the fact that the whole constitution of the Church of God, as founded by our Lord, is inconsistent with such an hypothesis. Our Lord is not here speaking of the details of the arrangements which He was to make for the government of the Church, and it would have been out of keeping with His reticence on such subjects at this time if He had here spoken of the prelates, on whom in particular instances the solution of the questions between man and man might devolve. It is the same as to all utterances with regard to the organization of His Kingdom.

All this our Lord left to be unfolded by the Apostles, after they had received His final instructions, delivered during the forty days between His Resurrection and His Ascension. It is not impossible that all these matters may have been partly communicated to His Apostles at an earlier period. There must have been some revelation on these points made in that remarkable discourse which He must have delivered at the Last Supper, when He established the Blessed Eucharist, and for that purpose must have spoke about the Christian priesthood, which the Church tells us that He then imparted to the Apostles. For our Lord must then probably have added some details concerning the

administration of the other sacraments of the new law. But whatever He said at that time has been kept in silence by the Providence of God, even in the narratives of the Evangelists. St. John himself tells us not a word of this part of the teaching of that night. These things were not to be committed to the written Gospels, but to be confided to the practical governors of the Church, which used and wielded her powers long before the Gospels were formed and put forth. Thus our Lord contents Himself in this place with telling His disciples to appeal in a third resort to the authority of the Church, meaning undoubtedly the Christian ministry, but not specifying further than was necessary for His present purpose. Beyond the claims of brotherly charity, which were the foundation of the appeal in the first instance, of man to man, beyond the influence of the opinion of the community in general and of the desire which all must entertain for the common peace, there would lie the power and authority of the Church and her governors, and to this therefore there would be recourse in the third instance, if the other two appeals should fail.

Here again we come to the most loving and adequate provision made by our Lord for the peace and happiness of the Christian community, which was to be a perfectly organized Kingdom, in which, therefore, there was to be the power of punishment as well as direction and legislation, the power of judging and deciding controversies, as well personal as doctrinal or ecclesiastical. Whether the decisions of the Church are enforced by the external law must depend on the position which she occupies with reference to the secular state at any particular time, though it is impossible to conceive a perfect system

of Christian polity as regards secular matters and questions in which there could be any antagonism between the two powers, ruling, in the intention of our Lord, and in His design for his Kingdom, over subjects identically the same. But our Lord is speaking now of the Christian law binding the consciences of men, and of men living in perfect contentment under the sweet yoke of His law. In such case there is no need of any external enforcement of Church decisions. They enforce themselves. The history of the New Testament is abundantly sufficient for the illustration of the words, in this place, for we have in the Acts the exercise of judicial functions in the manner of punishment, by St. Peter, and the Epistle to the Corinthians shows us the exercise of the same power on the part of St. Paul and the priests of the Corinthian Church, in his name and authority. Here again our Lord does not enter into detail, probably for the same reason as has been already mentioned. It is enough for Him to show that when the authority of the Church has been appealed to, Christians have no further tribunal on earth to which they can have recourse as such. 'And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.'

This is the second time that our Lord is related to us in the Gospels as having mentioned the Church. It is, of course, by no means certain that He had not spoken of it, even frequently, to His disciples in private, at least in the short interval of time which may have passed between this occasion and the confession of St. Peter. We at least can easily conceive that it must have been a source of peculiar delight to His Sacred Heart to be able to speak of this supreme invention and contrivance of His charity.

There was to be the opportunity for the exercise of charity in the simple remonstrance of which He had spoken in the first instance, as well as in the second more formal and solemn method of correption which He had pointed out in the second place, when every word was to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. But in neither of these two cases could there be any official exercise of the authority of our Lord in the Church, as vested in His representatives. This was an institution of the highest wisdom and beneficence on the part of our Lord, having for its aim and scope the maintenance of the two inherent characteristics of His Kingdom, on which He set the greatest store, namely, the purity and unsullied integrity of its doctrine, and the inviolate sanctity of its unity, while it had other most blessed effects almost without number, resulting in the unruffled peace, the mutual love and intelligence and assistance of the members of the Church, its advance in all perfection of the individual souls within it, and of the Body in general. St. Paul sums up some of these ends of this great institution, in the famous passage to the Ephesians,[2] when he says among other things that the Christian ministry is established 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ . . . doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him Who is the Head, even Christ, from Whom the whole Body, being compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of

[2] Ephes. iv. 11—16.

every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in charity." It would require a long commentary to draw out all that is contained in these pregnant words of the Apostle, but it will be enough to have here recited them for the purpose of showing the multitude of ideas which rise up in his mind in the contemplation of the scheme of the Church, especially in all that relates to her government and discipline. It is to this discipline that our Lord here refers, it is this to which He bids the injured brother appeal in the last resort. He does not in this place draw out the details, the persons in whom the authority is vested, the manner of the appeal or of the judgment, the sentence or decree, and its issue and sanction. All these matters belong to the particulars of the system which was not yet organized, and in hearts full of humility, charity, and thankful appreciation of the blessings contained in the administration of the Church, there would be no disposition to make difficulties and require special instructions on points such as these.

The final and extreme punishment which is here appointed by our Lord is that he that will not listen to the Church, is to be to him who has warned him as the heathen and the publican. That is, he is to have no friendly and brotherly intercourse with him. The sentence of excommunication, or casting out of the Church, would in such cases of contumacy be inflicted by the authorities whose admonition had been disregarded. But the part which the complaining person would have in the execution of the sentence would be that which is here named. He was to withdraw from all brotherly intercourse with the offender, not in any want of charity, but, on the contrary, out of the motive of charity, doing his part

in the carrying out of the sentence of the Church, which is inflicted, not vindictively, but for the sake, in the first instance, of the offender himself, in order that by finding himself deprived of the spiritual benefits of the Communion of Saints, and treated by his brethren in a manner corresponding to his exclusion from those benefits, he may enter into himself and repent. The sentence was also inflicted for the public good, in order that mischief might not spread from one person to another, which would be the natural result if it were known that a Christian had been admonished by the authorities of the Church and had refused to obey them.

This then is the extreme limit of the chastisement of wrong within the Church of which our Lord speaks. From this we may gather, that in a normal or perfect state of the Christian commonwealth there need be no punishment either more severe or more efficacious than this simple withdrawal of spiritual privileges in the first place, and the cessation of brotherly intercourse on the part of the faithful in general in the second place. There would be so universal and deep an appreciation of the terrible loss to the soul involved in the exclusion from the sacraments when inflicted as a chastisement, that men would shrink with horror from the thought of incurring a loss and a risk so great. The privileges of the Communion of Saints would be so thoroughly understood and so highly valued practically, that a person under sentence which deprived him of them, would become at once an object of the utmost commiseration and the most fervent prayer, which would of themselves be sufficient to overwhelm him with shame and compunction. He would be like a man under sentence of death for crime in a thoroughly

Catholic community, in which such a person becomes immediately the object of the most earnest prayer, public and private, to all, in order to win for him the grace to make a holy and happy end. The public feeling and opinion of the faithful, in such a state of Christian society, would thus have immense efficacy in producing penitence. And when this feeling and this opinion manifested themselves in the social proscription and shunning which is here enjoined by our Lord, as we find it afterwards enjoined by St. Paul, nothing more would be required to bring about the change of heart on the part of the culprit, which is all that is required for his amendment and restoration.

It is difficult indeed to carry back our minds and feelings so as to place ourselves, as it were, in the holy atmosphere of the Christian community which is here supposed by our Lord. But we may gather from what has been said the immense difference between such an atmosphere and that in which we ordinarily live, as well as the greatness of the loss, spiritually and socially, to the whole community and to every single soul within it, which is ordinarily so little thought of by us. We can hardly imagine the immense benefit that must have resulted to souls, in the ancient days, when ecclesiastical discipline was in full vigour, from the public penances and sentences with which public crimes were visited. Something of the same kind must be the influence on society at large, when its members are not unfit for it, of the system of fraternal correption and of appeal to the rulers of the Church in cases of private wrong. We are far enough indeed from such a state of things, and in the mixed society in which we live, it could hardly be otherwise. It is clear that the differ-

ence is one which makes the practice of Christian virtue, the recovery of grace after it has been lost, the universal maintenance and recognition of a high standard of justice, and the daily and constant exercise of perfect mutual charity, difficult to us in an extent which is indefinitely great. One of the chief advantages which are found in the life of the cloister is that there the standards of perfection are practically recognized, and the force and weight of public opinion and general example are helps to the attainment of virtue instead of being hindrances thereto. But in a state of society at large, in which the practices which are here enjoined by our Lord would be easy and general, there would be the same weight of opinion and example on the side of good. In the ordinary conditions even of Christian society, as it now exists, with so large an admixture of elements not Christian, this cannot be said truly, and in consequence, some of the most powerful aids to virtue and justice are turned into supports of imperfection, into shields of selfishness, into instruments of vice. We wonder at the comparative social impotence of Christian influences, and we forget all the time that Christians have hardly the power of making the society in which they live what it ought to be in this respect. The simple holy and salutary means which our Lord has provided are found to be beyond our strength to use, and thus the souls of the faithful suffer, discord and suspicion rule in the place of charity, the measures of worldly redress and revenge are substituted for the sacred discipline of the sanctuary, and even the Christian body suffers by decay of internal strength and coherence, and is no longer able to hold up to the eyes of the darkling world the light which might redeem it and give it life.

We can quite easily trace the lines of the procedure here laid down by our Lord for action in such cases, in the dealings of the Corinthian Church with the offender of whom St. Paul speaks. It would be foolish to expect to find in the Epistles the first remonstrance of the injured person, or even the taking of one or two witnesses with him to reprove the culprit, who was in this case the son of the injured man. But the sentence as related by St. Paul is in harmony with the prescription here given. It is all the more remarkable, as he was at a distance, and could only write, 'I, indeed, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him that hath so done, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[3] This delivering to Satan is the phrase used in the Epistles for excommunication, whereby the sinner was handed back, as it were, to the world out of which he had been delivered by his admission to the Church, and which was lying under the dominion of Satan. The language of the Apostle about the destruction of the flesh may refer to the afflictions and corporal miseries which often fell on the excommunicated, as a brand fixed upon them by the Providence of God, and indeed we are told, by some of the Fathers, that in those early days of the Church it was not uncommon for such persons to be actually possessed by devils after their ejection. But the scope of the whole sentence is clearly seen to be the emendation and correction of the offender by sufferings of various kinds in addition to the great

[3] 1 Cor. v. 3—5.

punishment of exclusion from the Church, in order that his soul might be saved.

There was also the other object in view, the putting away from the midst of the Christian community the evil doer. And in the second Epistle to the same Church St. Paul speaks of his ratifying the indulgence which they had shown to the culprit in receiving him back on his repentance. Thus in that case the exercise of the authority of the Church had been efficacious. Elsewhere the Apostle lays down the rule that they are to have no intercourse with fornicators, that is, with Christians who have fallen into that sin, which was hardly considered such among the Corinthians. He says[4] that he means those who sin in this way among their own body, for as for the world outside them, they might have to quit it altogether, as far as concerned social intercourse, if they refused to meet fornicators and other sinners. His whole way of dealing with these and other cases shows that St. Paul had these precepts of our Lord constantly before his mind.

'Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven.' These words seem to mean that the sentence of the Church, in cases like those of which He has been speaking, is an exercise of true and sovereign authority, which will not be without full ratification on the part of God. He will acknowledge and hold valid the sentence of His ministers on earth, both as to what they bind and as to what they loose, and in the case before us, as to the excommunication of the offender and as to the remission of his punishment on his doing penance, as

[4] 1 Cor. v. 10.

was the case with the incestuous Corinthian. These general words which are now addressed to the disciples or to the Church, without specification of persons, are the same which our Lord had used in His great promise to St. Peter after the confession of that Apostle, except that He leaves out here the promise of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.[5] The safe rule in all the questions which may be raised concerning the powers thus imparted by our Lord is, to take the words in each case in their simple and natural meaning, without allowing the thought of any contradictions between the statements, as made at different times, but rather combining them together. Thus we learn from the language used by our Lord to St. Peter, the promise that what he individually bound or loosed on earth should be bound or loosed in Heaven. We learn from this passage the promise as to what the Apostles generally should bind or loose should be in like manner ratified in Heaven, and we naturally understand the words to apply to those who, all through the history of the Church, should represent the Apostles. There is no contradiction between these statements, but when combined they imply that the power is so promised to St. Peter as to be communicated to the Apostles, and also communicated to the Apostles as in union with St. Peter. At Cæsarea Philippi our Lord was undoubtedly addressing St. Peter alone, and in this place He was undoubtedly addressing the other Apostles with St. Peter. He did not mention on the first occasion any one but St. Peter, nor on the second occasion did He mention the body without St. Peter. There is therefore something true and important with regard to this matter, which belongs to St. Peter

[5] St. Matt. xvi. 16.

alone, and there is something true and important which belongs to the whole Apostolic body with St. Peter. The two truths do not correct one the other, or qualify one the other, but the first is the foundation of the second, and the second is the supplement and, so far, the completion of the first.

This much would be true if the two sentences of which we are speaking, were to be considered each one by itself, without any regard to the occasion on which our Lord spoke His words, and the purport of His discourse on each occasion. But we can never hope to gain a complete intelligence of His Divine words without such a regard. On the first occasion our Lord was making a most magnificent, indeed a unique, promise to St. Peter, that He would build His Church upon him, that He would give to him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the rest. The words, therefore, about the power of binding and loosing on earth, the exercise of which power by him was to be ratified and to hold good and valid in Heaven, must be understood in the light which is shed on them by the foregoing words about the foundation of the Church and the keys of the Kingdom. But these are words which were never addressed by our Lord to any of the Apostles but St. Peter, nor to all the Apostles with St. Peter, although it is true that in a certain sense the Apostles are the foundation of the Church and have the power of the keys. The words, therefore, about binding and loosing, in the first place in which they are used, must be understood of a prerogative personal to St. Peter, and if, as is the case, they are afterwards used to others, or even to the whole Church, it must be understood in such a way as not to detract from this personal prerogative.

On this second occasion of the use of these great words it is clear that our Lord was most carefully avoiding anything that might foster in the Apostles in the slightest degree the spirit of contention, emulation, jealousy, ambition of the first place, and the like. The whole of these successive discourses of which we have been speaking in the present chapter, are framed so as to present to their minds, one after another, motives of humility and watchfulness over their own feelings and aspirations. It seems to be our Lord's object to suggest to them a whole series of deep and stirring thoughts with relation to the work they have to do, and the kingdom in which they have to labour, which may raise and spiritualize their conceptions on these matters, and so supplant the movements of ambition by others more in harmony with the dignity and greatness of their office, the momentous issues and even the immense perils involved therein. They had been disputing, and were afraid to tell Him. He speaks of the dignity of the souls of the little ones for whom they had to labour. He tells them that to receive one child is to receive Himself and His Father. They speak to Him of their prohibiting the labours of a well-meaning man outside their own company, and He counsels greater gentleness. He passes quickly to the danger of scandal, a danger terribly involved in their contentiousness and rivalries, and He enlarges greatly on this point. He even makes a transition in His language from the subject of giving scandal to little ones to that of indulging in anything that may be a stumbling-block to themselves, for He uses the language of the Sermon on the Mount about the hand and the eye and the foot to be cut off or plucked out. For in truth there is always the closest

connection between giving scandal to others and incurring danger to ourselves by not rejecting occasions of sin, a fault which can hardly ever be committed without endangering others as well as ourselves. While they were discussing who was to be the foremost, they might be giving scandal to the faithful, and incurring the danger of the eternal flames and the undying worm. Again they ask Him their question openly, and He insists on the necessity of conversion of heart and self-humiliation even for an entrance into the Kingdom.

We hear again of the risk of scandal and its terrible heinousness, grounded on its unique mischievousness and power of ruining souls. Then we hear of the Angels watching over the little ones, the Angels who always see the Face of the Father, and this suggests the thought of the perfect order and peace and mutual condescension of those glorious spirits, as well as of the power to protect and to plead in a way which may bring down the Divine vengeance on those who injure their charges. Then our Lord sets before them their great patterns, the love of the Good Shepherd hunting after the sheep that has strayed, and the will of His Father that no one of the little ones should be lost. He passes then to the peaceful provisions which He has made for the remedying of scandals, divisions, offences, in the Church, according to which provisions every effort is to be made before recourse is had to the judgment of authority, which judgment is to be final and without appeal when it is once given. It is then, at last, that He comes to the words of which we are now speaking.

It is easy to see that it was enough for the truth of our Lord's declaration, and also entirely in keeping

with His aim in keeping down every movement of ambition or contentiousness in the Apostles, for Him simply to assert the existence of the power of binding and loosing in their body. It was no time for going beyond the immediate question of the Divine ratification in Heaven of the sentence which they should give on earth. The whole doctrine on this great point has to be gathered from a comparison of the various passages in which our Lord is recorded as having laid down the truth on the subject. But the faithfulness of the Gospel narratives confines them to His exact words on each occasion, and those exact words were determined by His purpose at the time. And it would have been out of keeping with the whole tenour of His discourse at this time, if our Lord had entered on the subject of the exact relations of Peter to the rest or of the rest to Peter. It would have suggested the very questions, of which they were not yet fit to receive the answers, even if that had been the right time in the unfolding of His Divine plan to enter upon them. We can imagine nothing more incongruous than any interruption of our Lord by the Apostles, on this occasion, to ask if they had exactly the same powers, and in the same way, as those which had been promised, in the same words, to St. Peter, after his confession. But there would have been much the same incongruity if our Lord had Himself paused to explain the extent to which His two promises were identical, or the relation between the powers promised in each severally. He is mainly bent on impressing them with the greatness of an office, the exercise of which is ratified in Heaven while it takes place on earth.

There is, as it appears, the same thought on the part of our Lord for the recommendation of unity,

concord, charity, in the two beautiful statements which follow, and which, on any other hypothesis, it is not easy to connect with the words of which we have been speaking. 'Again, I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in Heaven.' This is not a simple promise to prayer, such as that which our Lord had made and was to make on various occasions, as when He said: 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find,' and the rest. It is a promise to united prayer, to prayer, therefore, made in charity and in concord. This it is that connects these words with the whole tenour of the passage which precedes them. So great is the love of God for concord and mutual love, that He makes a promise to prayer which is at once prayer and an exercise of mutual charity, which He does not make to prayer which is made singly. The union of hearts in prayer adds to it a new force and brings down on it a fresh blessing. If we reverse the picture also, we see another truth of equal importance. For prayer that is made with a heart without unity and peace and love is deprived of the power which it might naturally claim. This is the reason why our Lord insists so much, in the Sermon on the Mount, on a state of perfect charity before we go to the altar. 'Leave thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.'[6]

The principle here laid down is not exactly the same which is the foundation of the immense efficacy of united prayer in the congregation of the faithful. That solemn public prayer is the act of the Church

[6] St. Matt. v. 25.

as such, and has thus a special power and right of its own, as the pleading of the Bride of our Lord. And, moreover, the effect of worship and prayer offered in the assemblies of the Church is very great in the way of kindling devotion, inflaming zeal, raising the heart and mind to Heaven, to the great assembly of the angels and saints who are for ever praising and worshipping God, and interceding for us. The blessing here spoken of belongs to any two who agree to pray for the same request, even though the prayer of each is made in private, at a distance from the other, and at a different time. It is this promise which has produced the pious custom of novenas and intercessions of all sorts for some particular specified object, dear to the hearts of some one or two persons, who enlist in their holy enterprize the prayers of all their friends, and gain a special blessing from this expansion and fresh exercise of Christian charity. The promise, no doubt, involves all the usual conditions on which prayer is ordinarily heard. But it involves also a special pledge of the faithfulness of God in favour of prayer thus made. And, so far, it is a fresh motive suggested by our Lord for mutual charity and assistance, which, when secured, are sufficient of themselves to quench the flames of ambition and contentiousness.

'For where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.' These words appear to be spoken as if to furnish the reason for the former promise, as if it were meant that the Father would grant the petition of those who agree on earth to ask for anything, because He sees in the midst of any two or three who are gathered together in His Name, our Lord

Himself, Who is the power of all prayer, the sufficient reason for the granting of every boon. But it must be remembered that our Lord is here suggesting, as it seems, a number of considerations which may heal the movements of rivalry by putting in their place the absorbing joy and thankfulness which ensue from a knowledge and contemplation of the privileges and powers of the Christian body. This last declaration may be the foundation of the other, but it may also go beyond the other. He speaks of two or three being gathered together in His Name. Here there is a special blessing upon all such unions, whether those which are made in the churches when we assemble for worship, or private meetings for the purpose of prayer, and the like. But He also blesses in these words all holy associations of whatever kind, as when men are banded together in His Name for some purpose of zeal, or charity, almsdeeds, works of mercy, and the like, or again, religious societies and orders, in which men are indeed gathered together in His Name, not for a moment or a passing purpose, but by ties which are irrevocable and for objects which reach far into the unseen world. Our Lord is the bond of union and charity in all such cases, and not only this, but the object of the tenderest love and complacency of His Father.

CHAPTER IX.

The measure of Forgiveness.

St. Matt. xviii. 21—35; *Story of the Gospels*, § 88.

ALTHOUGH nothing had been said in the course of the last discourse on our Lord concerning the forgiveness of injuries, still the subject of such forgiveness lies very close to that of the remonstrance with one who has injured another, and with the general tone of that instruction. Thus it is not surprising that the question asked by St. Peter should have been connected in the mind of St. Matthew with the other subjects lately discussed, even if the question itself was not put by the Apostle to our Lord at the very same time with the former discussion. It may certainly be assumed that the interval of time was not long between the discourse of which we have been speaking, and the question as to forgiveness and the beautiful parable with which our Lord answered it.

Then came Peter unto Him, and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive Him? till seven times? Jesus saith to Him, 'I say not unto thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times. Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold,

and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying, Pay what thou owest! And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now, his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him, Thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me. Shouldest not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall My Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.'

This beautiful parable sets before us one side of the mercifulness which is characteristic of God, and the imitation of which He insists on almost more urgently than anything else in those whom He makes His children in this world. The side of this gracious attribute which is here exhibited is chosen by our Lord on account of the question asked him by St. Peter, which referred to the forgiveness of injuries to a brother. For forgiveness of debts and injuries is mercy exercised in one particular way. We see the other side of the same attribute in such parables as those of the good Samaritan or the ten

virgins. In those others the part of God's mercifulness which is selected for display is the compassion on afflictions of every kind, whereas here, as has been said, it is the peculiar act of mercy which consists in the forgiveness of offences. For the mercifulness of God, even as far as it can be imitated by us, exercises itself in a great many various ways. But, again, our Lord is led by the form of the question put to Him, to speak directly rather of the obligation of the practice of perfect forgiveness than of the enormous blessings which are involved in that virtue, and which ought to make us welcome every occasion of its practice as the finding of a great treasure, rather than submit to the use of such occasions as a duty. Our Lord bids us pray daily, 'Forgive us our trespass as we forgive those who trespass against us.' Thus He bids us take into our mind and heart, whenever we repeat His Prayer, all the offences which we may have received, of every kind, as well as all those that we may have committed, and by the perfect forgiveness of the first fit ourselves to gain the perfect obliteration of the obligations we have incurred by the second. Thus we are continually to practise our souls in this Divine virtue, especially in order that we may continually receive the pardon which God bestows on us for its exercise. This is what He means when He says, 'When you shall stand to pray, forgive if you have ought against any man, that your Father also Who is in Heaven may forgive you your sins.'[1] The teaching of this parable is precisely the same, but it is put in a different way. Instead of teaching us that if we want to be forgiven we must make an act of universal forgiveness before we ask for our own pardon, our Lord here tells us

[1] St. Mark xi. 25.

that our own pardon will be cancelled and reversed if we do not from our hearts forgive whatever we may have to forgive.

The parable is so simple in its obvious meaning that it hardly requires much explanation. But there is always in these parables of our Lord a question as to the signification of the particular details, apart from the general scope of the parable, which is plain to all. And in this case there are some few points on which it may be worth our while to inquire how far they may have a special meaning of their own. The question of St. Peter, as has been said, was probably suggested by the general tenour of the doctrine which our Lord had been laying down. The Apostle thought it a very great thing indeed to propose that he should forgive his brother seven times over. Indeed there are very few men who would ordinarily go so far in the way of condonation of the same offence, and the mass of mankind would probably find something to blame, at least in a parent or a superior of any degree, who passed over the repetition of the same offence so many times as seven. But it is not necessary to suppose that there is question here only of the repeated forgiveness of the same repeated offence. Our Lord does not teach that superiors or parents are to forgive offences which are not repented of, or to forbear even from wholesome punishment in cases where that may seem to be needed for the emendation of the offender, or as an example to others for the due maintenance of discipline and virtue. There are in such cases principles involved peculiar to themselves. An offence may be forgiven from the heart which yet it may be a duty to punish externally, as the sin of David in the matter of Uriah was visited on him by God,

first by the death of the child born to him, and afterwards by the chastisement which he underwent in the rebellion of Absalom, and in other ways. But the majority of men would think that with whatever amount of sincerity the pardon of the same offence was sought at their hands over and over again, there must be some limit to their forgiveness, and few would go beyond St. Peter with his seven times, even if they went so far. It is, of course, not not so difficult to have a habit of perpetually forgiving, when there is not the additional circumstances of the repetition of faults several times forgiven, and it seems to be this habit of which our Lord is here speaking, the habit of most gladly and heartily welcoming as a great blessing every occasion of forgiveness which presents itself to us, as men bent on the acquirement of wealth hail with the greatest eagerness every occasion of enriching themselves more and more.

Our Lord's answer of seventy times seven must be understood as simply indicating that there is to be no limit whatever, that the number of times of the occurrence of the offence must have nothing to do with the question of its condonation. The Divine reason for this is contained in the truth which is represented in the parable by the forgiving of the debt of ten thousand talents by the King. This truth is that we are debtors to God for the pardon of innumerable sins, and that, in consequence, if we are to be His children, and to earn our forgiveness, we must set no limit to our repeated forgiveness of others, who may offend against ourselves. The proportion, or rather the impossibility of there being any proportion, between the offences in which we are debtors to God, and the cases in which men are,

as it were, debtors to us, is represented in the parable by the proportion between the ten thousand talents on the one hand and the hundred pence on the other. It is easy to see that the image used in the parable is utterly inadequate to sustain the comparison. For there can be no offence against man which can be compared in gravity with any offences which we commit against God. The truth that God makes our forgiveness of others the condition and the measure of our pardon by Him, as we are taught by the very wording of the Lord's Prayer, is touched in the parable by the significant feature, that the words in which the fellow-servant of the man who has been forgiven by his lord pleads for patience, are identical with those used by that man to his lord in the first instance. The enforcement on the part of God of the condition of forgiveness of others, if we are to hope for forgiveness from Him, is the main point of the parable, just as in the description of the separation of men at the judgment day as the sheep are separated from the goats, in the last of our Lord's parables, the connection between the practice of the works of mercy here and the eternal rewards which are to be allotted at that last day, is the main point of that teaching. The points as to which there may be some doubt or difficulty in the details of this parable are easily seen, and we may pause a moment to say a few words with regard to each of these.

In the first place, then, it may create some difficulty that it is said in the parable that, when the unmerciful servant had treated his debtor so cruelly and in a manner which displayed so much ingratitude to his own lord, 'His fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they

came and told their lord what had been done.' It is not probable that our Lord could mean here that the fellow-servants of Christians will make complaints against them to God, at least in the way of demanding vengeance and bringing an accusation against the offender. Thus this circumstance seems at first sight merely an ornament and embellishment in the parable, without anything in truth corresponding to it. But it may be meant that any want of perfect charity between man and man, especially between servants of the same lord, as is the case with Christians, or between persons belonging to different classes of society in mutual relation one with the other, is an injury to society and to the Church as such, and therefore a cause of pain and scandal to all good and loving members of the same, who have the interests of the community at heart. An act like that of the unmerciful servant has a direct tendency to destroy the peace of the Church, to bring down chastisements upon society, to separate class from class, to cool mutual love and confidence, and to impede the force of Christian prayer. Let us dwell for a moment on the considerations thus suggested.

Every one is edified and every one is blessed when charitable and merciful practices prevail. But although the saints of God and the holy Angels would not complain to Him in any angry spirit against offenders against charity, they might well be moved to pray very earnestly for the conversion of such offenders and the redress of the hardship. Their prayers might have the effect of bringing about, in the Providential order of things, some visitation on the sinner, which might issue in his conversion and in the relief of the poor sufferer from his severity.

And if God sent some chastisement, in the course of His Providence, on the home or the family of the ungrateful man, that would not be simply as a measure of vengeance and of anger. It would be rather, as all chastisements inflicted in this world are, ordained by and tempered with mercy, and a direct appeal to him to enter into himself, and so obtain once more the pardon of his fault. For it is constantly the way of God to plague those who have offended Him, especially in any scandalous way, by affliction which visits their homes and families, as if to make them consider what it is that they have done to bring down on them the anger of God. In this sense we may understand the complaint of the fellow-servants, as well as the chastisement which is spoken of in the parable as inflicted on the unmerciful servant, as when it is said, that the lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt.

Another point as to which question may be raised with regard to the details of the parable is contained in the passage in which it is said that the unmerciful servant is handed over by his lord to the punishment, or rather, the torture which he might have undergone, if his own lord had been equally unmerciful to him in the first instance. He is treated, according to the story, as if he had never been forgiven. It has been thought by some that this implies that when we fall into sin afresh, the pardon already accorded to us for past sins which have been confessed is altogether cancelled, and we become once again victims of the wrath of God, not only for the sin which has brought on us this renewed anger of God, but also for all others that we have ever committed, even though they may

have been cancelled by penance and absolution. It is true that the lord in the parable treats the unmerciful servant in that manner. But even if the doctrine which is meant to be drawn from this parable were to be understood in the strictest sense, in harmony with this detail, it would not follow that the punishment was now inflicted for the former sins. It would only follow that the guilt of the new sin of unmercifulness and ingratitude was heinous enough to deserve and receive punishment equal to the full exaction of the debt. It may have been, not that the old guilt revived, but that the circumstance of ingratitude and hardness added so much new guilt to the soul, as to make it liable to the punishment which it might have received if the guilt had not been forgiven. Thus any sin, once pardoned, is not revived by the ingratitude of the sinner who refuses to forgive in return the small offences that he may have to forgive. But this is in itself a great sin, and one which places the soul in a state of damnation, and more, in a state in which it is most difficult for it to obtain fresh forgiveness. For such hardness stops up the very fountain of God's mercies, which are only promised to us on the condition of our pardoning the offences of others against us.

A sinner reciting the Lord's prayer in this state of heart is really imprecating on himself the merciless anger of God. For he asks to be forgiven as he forgives, and as he does not forgive, he asks not to be forgiven. It is not the ingratitude which is irremissible, but the unmercifulness. There is always in every sin a large element of ingratitude, and we are probably none of us aware of the immense debt which we owe to God's justice in this respect. To be fully grateful to God requires an enlightenment

and a fervour which are found only in the saints. Unless we know all that we receive day after day, and hour after hour, from God, it is not possible for us to give Him the thanks which He deserves. Therefore the admixture of ingratitude in our service to Him is a fault which, in His infinite compassion, He may look on with greater mercy, though St. Paul tells that one of the chief causes of the miseries to which the heathen world was abandoned was their deep ingratitude to God, as far as they knew Him. But mercifulness requires the most exquisite enlightenment. It ought to be the very air which we breathe, for it is by the mercy of God alone that we are what we are, and have all that we have, and hope for all that we hope for. We can only be unmerciful by forgetting our own relations and position with regard to God, by having false ideas of our own rights and claims, and by utterly ignoring our own need of mercy. Thus unmercifulness is inconsistent with the love of God and the love of our neighbour, and is in itself an almost sufficient sign of reprobation. And when a man has just been imploring for himself the mercy of his offended and justly incensed Lord and Master, and has just received from Him the forgiveness of all his debt simply out of compassion, there must be in his heart a revolt and revival of malignity of the blackest kind, if he can turn at once on his brother and refuse him his pardon. All grace must be swept away from the soul in such cases, and therefore it is that there is no exaggeration in the figure used by our Lord in the parable where He describes the chastisement of this unmerciful servant, as being the exaction of all that he had himself been liable to before he was forgiven.

We have remarked that it has pleased our Lord

in this passage to insist on the duty of forgiveness rather from the terrible motive of the punishments to which we may be exposed by the contrary fault, than by setting before us the innumerable blessings which are placed easily within the reach of those who are careful to practise the merciful and forgiving temper. Just so He chose, in the passage of which this parable is the continuation, to dwell especially and more than once on the terrible punishment of the scandalous, although He did not altogether omit the immense blessings awaiting those who are careful of His little ones. The form of our Lord's teaching may be accounted for by the question of St. Peter. To ask how many times we are to forgive implies that there is to be a limit to our indulgence in this regard. It is not the language of one who looks on every possible occasion of forgiving any one anything as the most blessed of treasures. St. Peter seems to asks what was to be the precise limit put to his practice of a virtue which contained in itself so immense a treasure, as if perhaps it were possible for him to be too frequent in forgiving. Therefore the duty of forgiveness of his brother was put, by the terms of his question, as if it were more of a duty than a privilege, a thing the practice of which required urging on rather than checking. The true aspect of forgiveness is this which is placed second only in the question before us, and which is implied in the position which this virtue holds in the prayer of our Lord.

In very truth, every opportunity of forgiveness of another is a precious gift from the mercifulness of God, putting in our hands the power to bathe ourselves afresh in the life-giving streams of His grace and compassion. It is an occasion on which we are

told to take the key of God's treasures and help ourselves to as much as we will. Most truly then is it said by the Fathers that our enemies and all who injure us are our best benefactors, opening to us opportunities which otherwise we should never have. The teaching of our Lord, when taken into consideration together with the words of His prayer, suggests to us the careful study of every kind of mercifulness, as a skilful householder considers in how many ways and how quickly and most often he may multiply in profitable investments the resources which he has to dispose of. The measure set before us in our practice of this virtue is simply the relation in which we wish ourselves to stand with God. We wish Him to think of us and deal with us and behave towards us, with the most unclouded confidence and the most perfect affection, without even the slightest remembrance that we have ever offended Him, as also with the most perfect substantial pardon for our offences, without reserve or mistrust, as if we had always been most innocent and most faithful, emptying upon us the choicest boons of His most magnificent beneficence. All this, and more than we can imagine, more than our most soaring wishes can rise to, it is within our own power to obtain, by the exercise of the privilege of forgiveness to others, in this sense the highest of all the boons which He has placed in our hands, because it is the coin which purchases all boons whatsoever. We have but to carry out into every thought and word and action and feeling towards our neighbour this most perfect charity, and then we may be certain that all which we seek from God will be ours.

CHAPTER X.

Our Lord in Judæa.

St. John vii. 1—13; *Story of the Gospels*, § 89.

The time had now come for the transference of the scene of our Lord's labours from the remote but populous province of Galilee, to the part of the Holy Land properly called Judæa, the part in which He had been born, and in which His home would apparently have been fixed from His early childhood, but for the fear which St. Joseph had entertained on the score of the tyrannical son of Herod, who was the immediate successor to the throne on his father's death. In the eye of the world, it is needless to say, Judæa far outshone Galilee. It was the seat of government, the recognized centre of the territory of the holy nation, and above all, it was the part in which the holy city of Jerusalem and the Temple of God were placed. It was there that the worship of God was solemnly carried out, in rites which foreshadowed the great Sacrifice of Himself which our Lord was so soon to accomplish. It was there that the sacred traditions of the people were carefully preserved, there that the scribes taught, there that the priests were to be found whose lips were to keep wisdom. It was the natural sphere for the action and teaching of a great prophet, such as our Lord was held to be, and by His acceptance or rejection at Jerusalem would be de-

cided the ultimate issue of the movement which He had set on foot, and the success or the failure of the disciples whom He had formed into a band around Him.

Yet hitherto our Lord had indeed visited Jerusalem and Judæa from time to time, but He had never fixed His abode there, or made the country the chief seat of His teaching. Though not so populous as Galilee, Judæa was well furnished with inhabitants. There were numerous towns and villages there as in Galilee, through which it might be expected that the Messias should pass and make Himself known. And above all, there was the holy city itself, in which, up to this time, His voice had not been heard with any frequency or publicity. Motives of mercy and forbearance had had a large share in determining our Lord to avoid Judæa. Twice He had retired from it after a short visit to Jerusalem. Each time it had been because of the danger to which He was exposed from plots and conspiracies against Him. To present Himself there was to aggravate the danger in which the souls of His enemies were placed. Especially after the feast mentioned in the fifth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which we see reason to identify with the second Pasch in the course of three years of His Ministry, we find more than once mentioned as the reason for His retirement, the designs which had been formed against His life, in consequence of the miracle which He had worked on the impotent man at the pool on the Sabbath-day. We have seen that even in Galilee His steps were now not safe. He had to hide His movements from place to place, as one who takes care that His enemies shall not know beforehand where to find Him. Thus while He

seemed to exile Himself altogether from Judæa, He was almost in as much need of concealment in Galilee, notwithstanding the wonderful miracles which no one could question, and which surrounded Him, wherever He went, with the admiring and grateful homage of the people.

We know that our Lord had not gone up to Jerusalem for the Pasch of the year of which we are now speaking. St. John mentions Him at the time as being in Galilee and as working the great miracle of the five loaves. It is not likely that He attended the feast of Pentecost, in any of the years of which we have any account. The third great feast, that of Tabernacles, was now near at hand, and there must have been many among His disciples who were questioning whether He would attend this, having been absent from the other two. 'Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. And His brethren said to Him, Pass from hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works which Thou doest. For there is no man that doth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world. For neither did His brethren believe in Him.' These brethren of our Lord were probably among His disciples, though not of the inner circle of which the Apostles were the nucleus. We know also that others of our Lord's near relatives were themselves Apostles, and the words before us do not apply to them.

The meaning of the words of St. John, saying that these brethren did not believe in Him, seems to be that in the highest and fullest sense, and in the sense in which alone their faith could be the foundation of great services to Him, that is, in the sense of

believing Him to be the Incarnate Son of God, some of His own brethren, of the relatives and cousins among whom He had been brought up, and who belonged to the family group around our Lady and her cousins, did not yet believe in Him. This is the sense of the words in which they are more than once used by this Evangelist. The less they grasped the truth of His Divine Person, the more impatient would they be of the policy, as it seemed to them, of forbearance and avoidance of publicity. They understood the marvellous powers which He wielded, and they could have had no doubt that if He so chose, He could carry out the formation of His Kingdom by the exercise of Divine power. The doctrine of the Cross was foolishness to them. Their ideas of His Kingdom were the common ideas of the Jews of that day, though they must have lived in constant intercourse with Him and with our Blessed Lady.

It is very likely that there was a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, of longing for something more open and final and unmistakeable in the prosecution of His claims to the Kingdom, among some of the disciples, and that these natural relatives of our Lord put themselves, so to say, at the head of those who shared this feeling, in making a kind of solemn representation to Him of what they thought the excessive self-abnegation of His conduct. Why, they might say, so much about the Kingdom, unless He were willing to take measures to claim and to secure it? He seemed first to assert Himself, and then shrink back from self-assertion. He worked marvellous miracles, which recalled to the minds of the people how their fathers had been fed with manna in the desert, and then He fled by night across the sea, lest they should come and make Him a King. And

now, even in Galilee, He was hiding Himself. He alternately kindled the enthusiasm of His followers and then encouraged His enemies by His shrinking before their opposition. Meanwhile Judæa was full of His fame. His miracles had sounded His Name in the ears of the people, and there were thousands of disciples there ready to espouse His cause. The feast day would bring them together, it could not pass without some great demonstration in His favour, if He would but show Himself. 'Pass from hence,' they said, 'and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works which Thou doest. For there is no man that doth anything in secret and he himself seeketh to be known openly.' That is, this line of secret action is not the line of one who desires to become known. If he wants to be known, he comes forth from his secrecy, if he does not want to become known, he preserves it. They took it for granted that He did not desire to remain in obscurity. His whole conduct and mission implied publicity. 'If Thou doest these things, manifest Thyself to the world.'

It seems strange to us that the Evangelist should give, as the reason for these words on the part of these brethren of our Lord, that they did not believe on Him. It has already been said that the words mean that they had not the full faith in His Divinity. But how is this a reason for their language here? Their language was the language of human policy, and it urged the counsel of human prudence on our Lord in a rude and dictatorial way, which implied a censure on the line of conduct which He had hitherto pursued, as if they were better acquainted with the requirements of His Divine Mission than He was Himself. Their full belief in Him would

have kept them from this presumption and irreverence, for such it may have been in itself, although they may not have been aware of the want of respect which they evinced. Our Lord must have behaved with consummate meekness in all His dealings with His family, but we cannot fancy words such as those before us used to Him by our Blessed Lady or by St. Joseph, or by any of His near kindred who truly believed Him to be the Son of God. It is thought that they may have had the desire that by going to Judæa, where He would be teaching in the full light of publicity, and be continually watched and tested by the ecclesiastical authorities, it might become plain beyond dispute or doubt whether He were the Messias or not. It has even been thought that they wished Him to become more famous and conspicuous with a view that they themselves, as so near to Him in blood, might gain some great position in the eyes of the world. The reason given above seems sufficient for the explanation of the passage.

Then Jesus said to them, 'My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day, because My time is not accomplished.' Our Lord had intentions and counsels of His own with regard to His presence at this feast, but He did not choose to reveal to them, lest they might be interfered with. If He had gone up as His brethren urged Him, it would have been known. He would probably have travelled in the great caravan of pilgrims, among whom would have been great numbers of His own disciples, and His arrival at Jerusalem might have been made the occasion for a demonstra-

tion of popular enthusiasm and devotion to His Person, which would have had at once brought upon Him and them the hostility of the authorities. When we consider how soon the triumph of Palm Sunday was followed by the Passion itself, we are tempted to think that His words about His time not yet being accomplished may have some reference to the time of His great and final Sacrifice. But they may only mean that the time for His public appearance at Jerusalem was not to be just at once, and this may be implied in the contrast which is drawn between the time of our Lord and the time of His brethren. It is as if He had said, it does not matter when you go up to Jerusalem, one time is the same as another for you, for there is no hostile reception awaiting you there, because the world has no quarrel with you, as it has with Me. Thus your time is always ready. But I am the object of the hatred of the world, and therefore I must choose My time of presenting Myself to it according to the rules of My Divine prudence.

St. John, we know, has told us just before these words that the Jews sought to kill our Lord. The occasion of their hostility to Him has been already mentioned more than once. It lay in the fact of the miracle which He had wrought more than a year before this time, on the Sabbath-day, and in the doctrine concerning Himself which He had taught in the course of the discussion caused by that miracle. That, as has been said, was the occasion of the outburst of their hostility. But He here gives a truer and deeper reason, one which really lay at the bottom of all their feelings against Him. 'The world cannot hate you, but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it that the works thereof are evil.' This was the

true cause for their hatred of our Lord. His whole life and doctrine and teaching and public action were a continual reproof to the world, and especially the rulers, of whom He seems to be principally speaking. It was a protest, and an authoritative protest, against their ambition and pride and avarice and sensuality, their hypocrisy, the hollowness of their lives, the insincerity of their religious professions. It was a protest, as He says, not against their words and their teaching, but against their works. He afterwards told the people to do what they taught them, for they sat in the seat of Moses, but not to do after their works. Hypocrisy in high places, especially in the Church, writhes with instinctive misery at the presence of true pure untainted holiness, and this was what the world, as our Lord calls it, had to endure under the close proximity of our Lord. Men like Annas and Caiphas felt the secret rebuke of His character almost as the devils felt the power of His Divinity as He drew nigh to cast them out. Our Lord had spoken of this from the very beginning of His visits to Jerusalem. He had said to Nicodemus two years and a half before this time, 'This is the judgment, because the light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that His works may not be reproved. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest because they are done in God.'[1]

It is well known that in some texts the words of our Lord are given with a little difference. 'I go not up yet to this festival day.' For we are told immediately after that He did go up, though not in

[1] St. John iii. 21.

the way and at the time which His brethren wished or suggested. The word 'not yet' may have been inserted in some copies for the sake of avoiding the apparent contradiction. But it seems better to suppose that the words were as the Latin text has them. In the first place, if our Lord had said, not yet, He might have exposed Himself to further questionings. In the second place, the words in which He says that His time is not yet come, and that He does not go up to that festival day because His time is not accomplished, imply that His declaration about not going up is not to be understood without qualification, and is not meant to exclude His going up whenever He thought it well so to do. What He refused, in truth, was to go up with them, to join in the general body of pilgrims, to make a public entry, or something almost as conspicuous, into Jerusalem, to let His approach be known beforehand, and to give His enemies notice that He was coming or that He was there. If He had spoken more plainly in His answer to His brethren, they might have spread the news of His advent, and when He did at last go up quietly in the course of a few days, He might have lost all that He sought to gain by the unostentatiousness and secrecy of His journey. It may fairly be questioned whether His words gave any other impression as to His movements than that He was not minded to start at that particular moment. Everything in the order of our Lord's actions and movements was arranged according to the wisest decrees of God, and in this instance He did not choose to have His arrangements interfered with by the suggestions of human policy.

'When He had said these things He Himself stayed in Galilee. But after His brethren were gone

up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. The Jews, therefore, sought after Him on the festival day, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said, He is a good man. And others said, No, but He seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.' St. John thus describes the state of feeling and opinion concerning our Lord among the people collected for the feast. In the first place there was a general fear of being thought to believe in Him, which is what is meant when St. John tells us that no man spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews. We find a little later, in the same Gospel, that the authorities had already decreed that any one who professed to believe in Him as the Messias should be excommunicated at once. It was this arbitrary decree to which Nicodemus presently refers, as we shall see, when he asks whether it was the way of their law to condemn any man unheard. The consequences of excommunication were very severe indeed among the Jews, and the Chief Priests had now made up their minds to use the power which they possessed of inflicting these penalties on all who professed faith in our Lord, and they had taken care that their resolution should be made public.

Nevertheless, the people were divided in opinion concerning our Lord. As so often happens, the arbitrary acts of the supreme power did not carry conviction to the minds of men, who required some reason for an act which it was hard to justify on its own merits. The mere fact of the sentence having been decided on, caused greater curiosity about our Lord Himself, against Whom it was practically aimed. Thus He was sought for and asked about at

the feast. The two discordant streams of opinion are simply represented by St. John, some saying 'He is a good man,' and others 'that He deceives the people.' Possibly the rulers enjoyed a kind of triumph in their own minds, when the obnoxious Teacher did not appear as was expected at the feast. They had no doubt already determined how to deal with Him, but His absence relieved them of the trouble and the possible difficulty which might have been created if He had asserted Himself on this occasion, placing Himself at the head of the large body of pilgrims from Galilee, who might be inclined to support Him. He was afraid, they may have said to themselves. The measures already announced against His adherents would suffice to repress Him as well as them. They may have heard that of late He had been less conspicuous even in Galilee, and now He shrunk from appearing at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiphas may have congratulated themselves upon the easy success of a vigorous policy of declared antagonism to the new claimant. So the days of the feast wore on, and two or three were already past.

As we are now at the beginning of a part of the Gospel of St. John on which we shall be occupied for a considerable space of time, it may be well to say a few words in general about the characteristics of this part of his Gospel. St. John does not give us any detailed account of the teaching of our Lord in the Temple at the feast of Tabernacles. He tells us that our Lord went up into the Temple and taught, and he tells us of a good many things that He said, and that were said to Him or about Him. But the things that are thus related by the Evangelist, are not precisely the teaching to the people which He then delivered. That teaching was probably much

the same in character with the ordinary teaching of our Lord to the people, which was in the main, moral and simple, insisting on the great truths, and preparing them for penance and the reception of the Kingdom. We have a great deal of this kind of teaching in the portion of the Gospel of St. Luke, which must be taken in connection with this part of the fourth Gospel in the history of our Lord's teaching. The two Evangelists taken together, as has been said, furnish us with the only records which we possess of the teaching of this period. In most of its features it was identical with the earlier teaching of our Lord in Galilee, so much so that we find many details almost exactly the same. When our Lord was simply teaching the people His discourses were, more or less, repetitions to different audiences of the same great truths.

In the chapters on which we are now entering, St. John gives rather the less ordinary sayings of our Lord occasioned by the incidents which passed while He was teaching, and especially those sayings occasioned by the interruptions made in that teaching by the actions or comments of His enemies. Thus the subject-matter of the chapters of which we are about to give an account is, more or less, discontinuous. There is no direct onward flow of the discourse from one subject to another naturally connected with it. What our Lord says has in many cases a controversial or apologetic turn, on account of the hostile criticisms of which the Evangelist speaks. There is beautiful doctrinal and moral teaching in these chapters, and it is very likely that St. John was guided to record this for the purpose of furnishing the Church with authentic statements of our Lord concerning His own Divine Person and office, in the

days when the Evangelist was already old, and when the heresies on those subjects had begun to manifest themselves in the world. This suggests a further remark as to the contents of this portion of the fourth Gospel. If we link together these incidental sayings of our Lord, we find one subject continually recurring in them, whatever may have been the occasion which suggested the particular words used. That subject is His Father. It is as if He had always in view that manifestation of His Father of which it is said at the opening of this Gospel, 'The only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.' God as known to the Jews was the Father. The clear knowledge of the Three Divine Persons was one of the truths revealed by the new light which our Lord brought into the world, and we can trace all through the Gospel of St. John the instructions dropped, from time to time, by our Lord on this great subject. It is indeed wonderful to remark how He seems to have kept this before Him at the time that He was answering the most trivial and captious objections of His critics.

Interwoven in these chapters are the stories of two persons who come across our Lord's path at this time, the poor woman taken in adultery and the man born blind whom He cured and who was excommunicated for believing Him to be a prophet. The whole ends with the description by our Lord of Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep, the Good Shepherd, which may have been given on account of some incident of the time of which we have no record, but which may also be considered as an introduction to the active preaching through the towns and villages of Judæa which was begun immediately after the

delivery of that discourse. Thus the whole of these four chapters of St. John, from the seventh to the tenth, must be considered as strictly, or at least mainly, historical in their bearing on the continual warfare which our Lord had at this time to maintain with His enemies at Jerusalem, rather than a simple record of His teaching or of His miracles. They belong to the same class with those recorded in the fifth chapter, in which we have the account of the miracle on the impotent man, and of the disputation which followed, for the sake of which, as well as on account of the historical importance of that particular miracle, it is that we have the contents of that chapter preserved for us by this Evangelist.

It seems well worthy of remark, and may suggest many holy meditations, that our Lord should have selected this great feast of Tabernacles as the time at which He chose to lay the foundations of His great work for souls in Judæa and in Jerusalem. The feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous of the great festivities. It was intended as a yearly outburst of thankfulness and homage to God for the many mercies bestowed on the chosen people during the marvellous forty years of their sojourning and journeyings in the desert. They were to dwell in booths for seven days, that all might know that God had made their forefathers dwell in booths[1] in the desert. The spiritual significance of this celebration is most easily caught. The dwelling of the Israelites in tents was but a continuation of that life of strangers and pilgrims which had been begun by Abraham himself, 'who abode in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in cottages with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for

[1] Lev. xxiii. 43.

he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'[2] Thus the dwelling in the desert, which was commemorated at this festival, was a natural and recognized type of the passage of the children of God through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly land of promise. The imagery is used frequently by the Apostles. St. Peter entreats the Christians, 'as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from carnal desires, which war against the soul.'[3] St. Paul speaks of his body as the earthly home of this dwelling, which is to be dissolved and pass away, to be succeeded by another, 'the building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in Heaven.'[4] It is also to be noted that this feast came every year just after the great day of Atonement, of the meaning of which St. Paul speaks so much in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'when the High Priest alone, once a year, not without blood, which he offereth for his own and the people's ignorance, entered into the Holy of Holies."[5] And indeed, historically speaking, it may be truly said, that it was at this feast that the great sacrifice of Himself by our Lord was finally decided on in the councils of His enemies.

It is also remarkable that this feast appears to be selected by the Prophet Zacharias as a type and figure of the spiritual kingdom of our Lord which consists in His reign in His Church. At the end of his prophecy, he describes this reign in figurative language, and speaks of all the nations coming up to 'keep the feast of Tabernacles.'[6] Those of the families of the earth who will not do this, 'on them there shall be no rain,' the symbol in the East of every kind of fertility and fruitfulness. Egypt and the

[2] Heb. xi. 9, 10. [3] 1 St. Peter ii. 11. [4] 2 Cor. v. 1.
[5] Heb. ix. 7. [6] Zach. xiv. 18.

families of the Gentiles are specially mentioned as liable to this curse if they will not come up to keep the feast of Tabernacles. Thus the application of the chief features of the blessings commemorated at this festival in a spiritual sense, natural and obvious as it is, is confirmed by the language of Scripture and of prophecy.

We cannot doubt that during these days of the great feast of Tabernacles, our Lord delivered much beautiful teaching in His ordinary way in the Temple, that He drew to Himself the admiration and confidence of the multitude, who had never before seen Him teaching them in this authoritative and continuous manner. We gather hints as to this from the eagerness of the people to be early in the Temple to hear Him, and from the words even of the emissaries of His enemies themselves, the officers who were sent to arrest Him, but who came back to the authorities saying that never did man speak like this Man. But the account of this teaching has not been preserved for us by St. John, whose Gospel is uniformly devoted to other matters. We must gather our ideas of it from the other Gospels, but especially from that of St. Luke, in the large part of His work which that Evangelist devoted to the teaching of this period, although he leaves aside all that passed in Jerusalem itself, following, in this respect, the example of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

It is therefore necessary to remember that it would be to give ourselves a very inadequate idea of what was passing at this time with our Lord, and in particular of what was passing at this very festival of Tabernacles, if we were to leave out, in our own minds, the truth that there was this direct teaching of the people going on all the time, broken in upon as it was by

the interruptions of which mention is made. Our Lord did not go up to this festival for the purpose of disputing with His enemies, or at least for that purpose only. He went up for the purpose of beginning at Jerusalem itself the great missionary work, as we should call it, of preaching the Gospel truths over the whole country of Judæa, as we already know He had done in Galilee. He was not to give to this preaching a period of time nearly so long as that which He had spent in the evangelization of Galilee. His time was now short, and He had also to spend some part of what remained to Him in the region of Peræa, which He does not seem to have visited before. But the time which He spent in Judæa was to be one in the main of great activity, and He multiplied Himself, so to say, by the mission of the seventy-two disciples, as a preparation for His own coming. By means of these heralds and forerunners He was enabled to prepare the populations in various parts at the same time for His own visits and preaching, and thus to produce in short time a great and lasting impression.

Another thing that must be noted in relation to this period of our Lord's activity, and which might easily escape observation, is that it must be taken for granted that the continuous stream of His miraculous works was flowing all this time as abundantly, probably, as ever, although there are but very few distinct miracles recorded by the two last Evangelists. None at all are recorded by them except for some special purpose connected with each miracle. Thus St. John tells us only of the miracle on the man born blind, which occurred at this very feast of Tabernacles, and which had as decided an influence on the conduct of our Lord's enemies as the previous

cure of the impotent man at the pool, and as the great and crowning miracle of the raising of Lazarus. St. Luke only adds two or three more, each one of which has some particular connection with points of teaching on which our Lord wished to insist. But we gather from incidental notes that this period was marked by miracles of healing and the like, which may be called ordinary incidents of our Lord's preaching, and that the great means by which the attention and favour and reverence of the multitude were won for Him was the constant working of these miracles. We must therefore set down this also as one of the features of the period about which we are now speaking, which must by no means be omitted when we endeavour to give to ourselves an account of the actions of our Lord at that time.

When the first two Gospels were put together, at a point of time not at all far distant from the beginning of the Gospel teaching after the Day of Pentecost, it was most natural that the fulfilment of the prophecies, and the miraculous signs by which the mission of our Lord was tested should fill a very prominent place, as well as that more ordinary teaching of His, which was carried on by the Church in her instructions to the people. · When the later Gospels came to be written, those most elementary features in the system came more to be taken for granted, or at least for known, and St. Luke and St. John occupied themselves in filling up historical and dogmatic details which it had not been the work of the earlier Evangelists to record. It is absurd to think that they did not record them because they did not know them. It is impossible, as it has often been said, to suppose that St. Matthew or St. Mark could have been ignorant of the miracle of the

raising of Lazarus, or of the cure of the man born blind, of the doctrinal discourse in the synagogue of Capharnaum after the miracle of the five loaves, or of the disputations with the Jews in the Temple of which we shall presently have to speak. These great sayings and doings of our Lord were left out by them because they did not fall precisely within the scope which they set before themselves. The same may be said of other things which are omitted by the later Evangelists, among which we may certainly place the numerous unrecorded miracles of this time, which must be taken for granted when we set before ourselves the complete picture of its history.

CHAPTER XI.

The Feast of Tabernacles.

St. John vii. 14—53; *Story of the Gospels*, §§ 90, 91.

In the chapter of his Gospel of which we are now speaking, St. John gives us certain incidental sayings of our Lord, which serve to illustrate the general story of this feast of Tabernacles. They are not closely connected one with the other, but they have, notwithstanding, one dominant thought constantly recurring, which shows us what was in our Lord's mind at this time. In the first place, we are told of our Lord's teaching in the Temple, which, as has been said, was something altogether novel, on account of the fewness of the visits which He had hitherto paid to the city. Thus the first incident which is here mentioned by St. John is the wonder of the people of Jerusalem at His assumption of the office of teacher, knowing as they did that He never studied in the schools of the Temple, nor enrolled Himself among the professional scribes, nor sat at the feet of any of the great doctors. He assumed, in their eyes, an office for which He had never regularly qualified Himself. 'And the Jews wondered, saying, How doth this Man know letters, having never learned?' For His whole discourse and argument showed wonderful familiarity with the Scriptures and the law, and no doubt there was also here, as at other times and places, that tone of ineffable

dignity and authority about Him as teacher, in which He contrasted so strikingly with the ordinary scribes and teachers, even the most personally authoritative.

This first objection, therefore, was to His teaching at all, and we are not told that they objected to any particular point in what He taught. Nor do they seem to have made their remark to Him directly. It was what was passed about among themselves. Our Lord answered them in His own way, putting before them a rich store of truth on the subject, as well as directly meeting their objection. The answer to the direct objection is contained in the simple words, 'Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me,' that is, He was sent by His Father, and that was the reason why He taught at all. Being sent by His Father, He taught what He was sent to teach, and His doctrine had all the weight and all the importance and all the truth which it must have, seeing it came from the Father. The words in which He spoke of His Father as 'He that sent Me,' would remind them of the long discourse which He had held with them on the last occasion when He had been in Jerusalem, when He had worked the miracle on the impotent man, and had spoken so much about His Mission by His Father, and the various kinds of evidences by which that Mission had been witnessed to by the Father in His Providence. Then He had said at the outset, 'My Father worketh hitherto and I also work,' and now He speaks of the doctrine not being His own but the doctrine of Him that sent Him. This being the case, the words of our Lord imply a distinct appeal to all those evidences of which He had spoken to them on the former occasion, and rest His

claim to authority to teach on those evidences as having proved His Mission to be from God.

But, as has been said, our Lord did much more than simply give the proof of His authority. He added what was of far more importance at the moment, the means by which His hearers might be made certain as to the character of His teaching in itself, by which it might be known whether it came from God or not. 'If any man will do the will of Him he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself.' The means by which men might know whether the teaching of our Lord came from God, was a will, a resolution to do the will of God. Here He touched the weak point in the state of mind of His adversaries. At the end of His discourse with them on the former occasion, He had told them that they could not believe, because they sought honour one from another. That is, they were the slaves of human respect and human approbation, and their desire was rather to win these for themselves, than simply to do the will of God and obtain His approval. The one evil passion of ambition, desire of success and popularity, the approval of their own circle, on which their success in life depended, paralyzed in them all healthy desire to know the will of God and to do it. It was the same with any other evil affection, pride, envy, covetousness, sensuality. Any one of these would have been enough to deprive them of the simple honest good will and resolution to do the will of the Father, and in consequence any one of these passions, ruling in their souls, would be enough to prevent them from knowing whether the doctrine now set before them came from God or whether He spoke of Himself.

Our Lord's words require some further explana-

tion. It is not meant that the possession of a simple good will would be enough of itself to enlighten the mind as to the character and origin of the doctrine of our Lord. What is meant is that the freedom from any diverting or thwarting passion predominant in the soul, was a condition without which the knowledge concerning the doctrine would not be given. It is implied also, as a part of the statement, that God is most ready and desirous to give the light which will enable men to receive our Lord's teaching, or the teaching of the Church in His Name, that He desires to pour into the soul the light of faith, and that thus when men present themselves for the reception of this doctrine with simple guileless honest hearts, God will certainly give them the light which is necessary to enable them to see and welcome the truth of the doctrine. When our Lord speaks thus of good will and desire to do the will of God as the means of enlightenment, He is like one who might say that an eye free from anything evil in it would be enough to enable a man to see clearly the things before him, a statement which would not imply that the light of day was not also necessary for their perception. Goodwill secures the perception of the truth, because it removes the one obstacle by which the truth might be kept out of sight, the one hindrance to the ever ready action of God, in imparting light to perceive, as well in placing the truth before the mind by means of His appointed Teacher.

As the alternative to speaking doctrine from God, our Lord had mentioned the speaking of or from Himself. 'He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.' He next explains what it is to speak from Himself in the case of a teacher. 'He that speaketh of himself seeketh

his own glory, but He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him, He is true, and there is no injustice in Him.' This was the characteristic of our Lord, Who always spoke as the Messenger of God, although as that Messenger He spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes. This is just the reason why the teachers of the Church speak with so much certainty and authority, because they speak what they are sent to speak, not what they have invented or concluded or put together for themselves. It is their mission from God that makes them humble, and their character as speaking simply in His Name that makes them authoritative. The promulgation of the truths which they deliver is for the glory of God, for it is by faith in His word that the world acknowledges His truth in revealing what He reveals, and His infinite love and condescension in making to us any revelation at all. He is glorified when His message is delivered, and He is glorified when that message is received as from Him, and also by the effects of the message in human souls and hearts. This is the single object of the Christian missioner and apostle, as it was the simple aim of our Blessed Lord all through His own preaching. But when men invent doctrines of their own, and propose them to the acceptance of the people, it is clear that the acceptance of such doctrine can give glory to no one except those whose doctrines they are, that is, the persons who have invented and devised them, and who gain credit as great prophets and leaders of opinion when their doctrines for a time prevail among men.

Our Lord continues, 'He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him is true, and there is no injustice in Him.' These words may be understood either generally, of all who seek the glory of Him Who has

sent them, or particularly, with reference to our Lord Himself, Who is here defending Himself against the calumnies and false judgments of the Jews. Generally it is true that the humility which is required in the emissaries of God, who speak not in their own name, nor for the advancement of their own glory, is a security both for the truth of their message and for the uprightness of their lives. They have no part in the framing of the message they deliver, and are not tempted to garble it, and they have no object of self-interest in its delivery or promulgation, and so they are free from the danger of acting dishonestly or wickedly in the discharge of their office. And with regard to our Lord Himself, the Jews found fault with Him on two grounds, because He said He was the Son of God, and because He seemed to them to violate the law by healing the impotent man at the Probatic Pool on the Sabbath-day. Our Lord here, then, asserts that His doctrine is true in the first place, and that His conduct is unblameable in the second place.

In the narrative of the Evangelist, our Lord proceeds immediately to defend Himself against the charge which had been brought against Him, and on the strength of which it was that the rulers had endeavoured to bring about His death. There is no reason why the passage to this subject should not have been immediate, especially as we see that our Lord had already alluded to the matter in His words just now explained. But it is necessary always to remember that St. John may make large omissions in his accounts of our Lord's discourses. The reports as we have them in this Gospel are far shorter than we can suppose the whole discourses to have been, and this remark applies to all the recorded discourses

of our Lord. But it is clear that He had at this time a distinct intention of reminding the authorities at Jerusalem of their treatment of Him, of pointing out its wickedness, and, if it might be, leading them to repentance. If that could not be gained, they would at least have been warned that their devices were not unknown to Him, and might understand that their future plots would not be unexposed. He was now about to be in their near neighbourhood for a comparatively long space of time, and He determined that they should quite understand that He did not fear them, although He was perfectly aware of their hostility. Thus there is nothing abrupt in the introduction of this topic of their endeavours to take away His life.

'Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why seek you to kill Me?' There may have been many present to whom it would sound a strange thing that the rulers and Chief Priests of the holy people should desire to kill any one, especially One Who enjoyed so great a reputation for sanctity, and Whose life was a perpetual exercise of the highest charity. For among the crowd assembled in the Temple there must have been many strangers from all parts of the Holy Land, and even from distant parts of the world, who were not familiar with the characters of the leading men of the nation. The dwellers in Jerusalem, whom St. John in the course of this narrative mentions as a special class among the hearers of our Lord, probably knew more intimately the measures that had been taken or that were in contemplation against Him. But to the ignorant strangers His words sounded almost like those of a mad person. 'The multitude answered and said, Thou hast a devil!

Who seeketh to kill Thee?' They probably did not mean that He was actually possessed, but they meant to express their astonishment and perhaps also their indignation at His words. But the facts were as our Lord said. 'Jesus answered and said to them, One work I have done, and you all wonder. Therefore Moses gave you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the Fathers), and on the Sabbath-day you circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day, that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment.'

The argument of our Lord against the Jews is easily stated. They had blamed Him, and were prepared to treat Him as an enemy of the Law who might be hunted to death without mercy, because He had in their opinion violated the Law of the Sabbath by the miracle, and by enjoining on the impotent man healed at the pool to carry his bed on the Sabbath-day, His object being that, by this apparent violation of the Law, attention might be drawn to the miracle which He had wrought. He tells them that they do not themselves keep the Law which Moses has given them. They practised circumcision out of obedience to the Law of Moses, although in truth this holy rite was long anterior to the Law of Moses. But Moses had enacted it afresh. As the law of circumcision required that the rite should be performed on the eighth day from the birth, neither sooner nor later, it was constantly happening that the day on which the rite was to be performed was the Sabbath-day. The rite in itself was quite sufficient, in point of time and labour, to constitute a work

which they would consider a violation of the Sabbath. Nevertheless, they never failed to perform the rite of circumcision on the eighth day, Sabbath or not, and no one was considered to break by the rite of circumcision the Law of Moses which insisted on the observance of the Sabbath. Here, then, was an instance of a work considered necessary, by which the law of the Sabbath was constantly set aside without blame, on account of the necessity of obeying another positive law. Our Lord tells them that He has done even less in the way of violation of the law than this, because He has conferred a miraculous favour, which could not be wrought without the special intervention of God, on the whole of man, that is, He has given the man perfect health and strength after so many years of suffering. He had performed a great work of mercy by means of a miracle. How could that have been a violation of the law, which had been performed by the special assistance of God, beyond the powers of nature?

As there was no special mention in the Law as to the dispensation of the Law of the Sabbath in favour of the rite of circumcision, the practice must have been justified by a higher law, which must have been considered as overruling the rest of the Sabbath for the sake of the great good of obedience to the law of circumcision. But, if that was the case, why should our Lord be condemned for neglecting the law of the Sabbath for the sake of the great law of mercy which was carried out by the healing of the impotent man? The miracle was not denied, nor the immense mercy conferred by it questioned. Our Lord therefore bids them not judge according to the appearance, but judge just judgment. According to the appearance, the man carrying his bed was breaking the law, and

our Lord Who had healed him and bade him carry his bed was breaking the law, as also, in appearance, a priest or Levite circumcising a child on that day was breaking the law. But when things were considered justly, the man carrying his bed was performing a great act of public thanksgiving to God for a most singular and miraculous deliverance, and our Lord Who had enjoined the act, and had wrought the miracle, was giving great glory to His Father, and working out His mission of mercy, as His Father was always working His Providential work as Creator and Preserver of the world, a work which knows no Sabbath. There was far more in this of good, than in the act of circumcision of a child on the eighth day, that the law of Moses might not be broken.

This defence of Himself by our Lord seems to have attracted the attention of the crowd, and especially of some of those in it who could remember the occasion to which His words referred, and who also knew the action and mind of the ecclesiastical authorities. These men were astonished at the fearlessness of our Lord's manner, and also at the impunity which He seemed to enjoy. They knew that His death had been determined upon, and yet they saw and heard Him teaching boldly in the Temple, and not only defending Himself, but attacking the conduct of the authorities who were ranged against Him. 'Some therefore of Jerusalem said, Is not this He Whom they seek to kill, and behold, He speaketh openly, and they do nothing to Him?' And then they jumped to a surmise that this must mean that, after all, the rulers had come round to the opinion that our Lord's claims were true: 'Have the rulers known for a truth that this is the Christ?' They seem to have looked for guidance to the Chief Priests, and

seeing or thinking that they had abandoned their opposition to our Lord, they began to speculate whether their conduct might not be interpreted as a tacit sanction, instead of a proscription. This thought led them at once to another objection which must have been commonly raised against our Lord, and with which He now dealt in the manner related by the Evangelist. 'But we know this Man whence He is. But when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.'

The objection in itself was technical, and with all the proofs which they had of the Divine Mission of our Lord, it would have been reasonable to think, if any certain authority seemed to declare that the origin of the Messias was to be unknown, that there must be some misunderstanding of that authority. In truth, as is shown by the words of the Jews themselves on this same occasion, a little later, they knew that the Messias was to come from Bethlehem, the city of David, and their knowledge of this truth had been publicly proclaimed at the time of our Lord's Birth in answer to the question of the Wise Kings. In truth, they misunderstood the prophecies, and they did not know, what they supposed themselves to know, our Lord's history. They knew that the Messias was to be born of a Virgin, from the famous prophecy of Isaias,[1] and they did not know that our Lord had been born of a Virgin. Isaias had also said, in his prophecy of the Passion, 'Who shall declare His generation?'[2] alluding, apparently, to His Divinity. Micheas, who had spoken of His Birth at Bethlehem, had added, 'His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.'[3] These prophecies, which in truth referred to the

[1] Isaias vii. [2] Isaias liii. 8. [3] Mich. v. 2.

Divine Person of our Lord, seem to have been understood of the hiddenness of His human Birth and origin, all the more, probably, because the line of David, of which He was to come, had for many generations been lost in obscurity. It was true in one sense, as they said, that there was to be this characteristic about the Messias, that when He came, men would not know whence He came. But this mark was exactly fulfilled in Him, because they did not understand His Eternal generation or His Incarnation, nor did they know accurately even the circumstances of His earthly antecedents. To them He was the son of Joseph, the son of the carpenter of Nazareth, His mother's name was Mary, and they knew nothing of her virginal conception, and He had brothers and sisters, as they were called, whom every one knew or might know. This was the real difficulty, the discerning the Incarnate God in a man so like one of themselves, with all the ordinary surroundings of a peasant or an artisan.

Our Lord's answer to this objection against the truth of His Mission is like His other answers made on such occasions. That is, it not only removes the ground of the objection, but it sheds great treasures of light on the whole question of His Mission. 'Jesus therefore cried out in the Temple, You both know Me, and whence I am! And I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom you know not, but I know Him, because I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.' The crying in the Temple means to signify some elevation of voice and earnestness or vehemence of manner, as if He wished to attract attention to His protest against what had been said, or to something which He Himself was about to say. The first words of our Lord are

understood by some as if they formed a question. 'Do you indeed know Who and whence I am?' and they may be so taken, or in the way of an exclamation of astonishment at the assertion made. Little indeed did they know of Him or whence He came, except the mere external fact that He came from Galilee, which was not, after all, the actual place of His Birth. They knew just enough to deceive themselves about Him. What was the truth? 'I am not come of Myself.' This is, I come from One Who has sent Me. 'And He that sent Me is true.' That is, My Father has not only sent Me, but He has sent Me because He is true, and in fulfilment of promises and prophecies which were made to your fathers, which therefore you ought to know, and by means of which you ought to have been prepared to receive Me. This is the truth which our Lady and blessed Zachary dwell on in their Canticles, that God in the Incarnation has 'taken hold of Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, Abraham and his seed'—and that He has brought about the Incarnation, 'to perform mercy with our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, and the oath which He swore to Abraham.' All this had been lost on them, and thus they knew not the Father, nor His truthfulness and faithfulness in the Mission of His Son. 'But I know Him, because I am from Him,' I am from Him by essence and nature, and besides, 'He hath sent Me,' in My Human Nature, to carry out His work and to fulfil His words. Thus, then, the very text which they were applying to Him in order to encourage themselves in their incredulity, was enough on the contrary, to prove the truth of His Mission. He takes their own words, and ex-

plains them of Himself. But while doing this, He also asserts again, most clearly, His own Divine origin from His Father and His Mission in the Incarnation from His Father, taking occasion of these events to reassert the central truth which was so hidden from them. Thus these words spoken almost incidentally in the Temple, in answer to a technical objection, may have been inserted by St. John not simply historically, but with a tacit reference to the heresies of the later Apostolic age, which we are told that this Evangelist had before his mind when he was composing his Divine Gospel.

'They sought, therefore, to apprehend Him, and no man laid hands on Him because His hour was not yet come.' The connecting particle, therefore, is constantly used by St. John, not so much with reference to what has immediately preceded the sentence in which it is placed, as in reference to something already known to the reader as having been stated elsewhere. It may, however, be understood here as if our Lord's words about His Father, which have just been mentioned, had suggested to the authorities that He was liable to a charge of making Himself the Son of God, which is the second reason for their persecution of Him given by this Evangelist in his fifth chapter, to which the narrative before us constantly though tacitly refers. Our Lord took every opportunity of speaking of His Father as having sent Him, of His dependence on His Father, and other truths in connection with His Eternal Generation or temporal mission. The Chief Priests did not understand His words, but they saw enough in them to perceive that He claimed a very close union indeed with His Father. If the words here used refer to the past rather than to the present,

as causing this attempt of the rulers to apprehend Him, it is very natural to suppose that having missed Him at the beginning of the festival, and now having heard of His presence in the Temple, and of His assumption of the office of teacher, they determined to execute their plan of seizing His Person. In this case the words before us do not imply that the ground on which they wished to arrest Him was to be found in the lately reported words about His origin from the Father. They refer generally to the designs of these enemies of our Lord, desirous, if they could, to put an immediate stop to His preaching, and to punish Him as a blasphemer. But they were hindered in a marvellous way, of which no particular account is given, because, as so often happens with the enemies of God, Providence so arranged it that, without knowing why, they were not able to carry out their plans.

On the other hand, the next words give us the picture of the effect of His sayings and doings on the less prejudiced people. 'But many of the people believed in Him, and said, When the Christ cometh, shall He do more miracles than these which this Man doth?' The miraculous evidences to which the Scribes and Pharisees would pay no heed at all, had their natural effect on the simple people. They saw in them a sufficient proof that God was with Him, and further, their splendour and number made them think that they were sufficient to answer to all the prophetic anticipations of works of this kind which were to be found in the Scriptures concerning the Messias. This impression among the people came soon enough to the ears of the rulers, and made them determine once more to apprehend Him. 'The Pharisees heard the people murmuring

these things concerning Him, and the rulers sent ministers to apprehend Him.'

This must have been a formal decision on the part of the authorities, which, as we shall see, had no effect whatever. St. John perhaps mentions it in this place, because he has just mentioned the reason why the Chief Priests felt themselves forced to this step, which could not have been without some danger of a possible tumult, if the people saw our Lord in the hands of the officers, and it may not be meant that the actual mission of the latter was at this time. We find the return of the officers to the Chief Priests mentioned a little later on, and from the course of the narrative it seems as if it were on the day after this. St. John is not concerned at present to tell us what came of this order of apprehension, for he wishes to bring in another of our Lord's sayings to the people at this time. 'Jesus therefore said to them, Yet a little while, I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me. You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither you cannot come.' His words were not understood by the persons to whom He spoke. 'The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is this saying that He hath said, You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me, and where I am, you cannot come?'

Our Lord was speaking of the eternal interests of their souls, which were to be His care, and the objects of His labours and exertions for a short time longer. They were not to be allowed to make away with Him now that they desired it, on account of the evil passions within them which were reproved

alike by His words and His life. These passions prompted them to seize the pretext which seemed to be afforded by His words, in order to arrest Him and put Him to death. But nothing that they could do would avail to shorten the time during which He was to preach and work miracles among them. But that time was short enough in the purpose of the Father, and then it would be too late. We find more than one similar warning given at this time of our Lord's Ministry, and their lesson is summed up in the parable which He uttered a short time after this, about the unfruitful fig-tree, for which intercession was made that one more opportunity might be allowed it, and then, if that opportunity failed, it was to be cut down. In their madness, these poor rulers of the Jews were in truth cutting down the barren fig-tree even before it had had its one last reprieve. The folly of human malignity, the manner in which it so ingeniously contrives to defeat its own objects and to ruin its own best interests, could never be more signally instanced than in their conduct. The man sick and at the point of death, was actually plotting to kill the physician who alone could cure him, even before he had time to administer the remedy.

Our Lord does not speak, it may be noted, to these Jews, as He spoke to the Apostles, of the Passion. He speaks of His own going away, of their seeking Him and not being able to find Him, of their not being able to come whither He had gone. He passes over all their own action in the matter, which was to be the Providential instrument of His going to Him that sent Him. Here again He does not speak without mention of His Father. He is going to His eternal Kingdom,

in which He is One with His Father, and which will be given to Him also as the Son of Man, to impart to those whom He came to save out of the world, and who accept His invitation and close with His grace. They will seek for Him then, when it is too late. The whole history of their nation will be a long fruitless expectation of and craving for the Messias Who will never come to them, because He has already been to them and they have not known Him, and then it will be too late for them to qualify themselves for the share of His Kingdom which was once offered them, which now can never be theirs because they refuse to believe and acknowledge Him, and so cannot enjoy the fruition of His Divinity.

There may, perhaps, be some question as to the exact meaning of the surmise of the Jews, whether our Lord meant to go and preach among the dispersion, that is among the Jews who were scattered all over the face of the empire which had once been that of the Greeks, but was now a part of that of the Romans. They could not imagine the words to apply, as they did apply in the mind of our Lord, to the other world, the Kingdom of Heaven. The only question may be whether they thought He would confine Himself to the Jewish nation alone, wherever He might find its children, or whether He would include in the range of His preaching the Greek world, the world of the Gentiles itself. It can be of little consequence which of these two meanings is the right meaning, but the use of the word dispersion seems to point to the Israelites scattered, as has been said, over the face of the civilized world.

St. John next tells us of one of the most striking

incidents at this great feast, in order to understand which we must refer to what is preserved us by the Jewish writers concerning the ceremonies of the festival itself. 'And on the last and great day of the festivity, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me as the Scripture sayeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him, for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' It has been stated that the whole of the feast of Tabernacles was a commemoration of and thanksgiving for the mercies bestowed upon the people in the wilderness during the forty years, and as it was celebrated at the time of year when all the harvests and the vintage were over, it was a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving on this account also. The people dwelt in booths around Jerusalem, and it is natural to suppose that so much hilarity and rejoicing could not be without occasional excesses in the way of license and sensuality. This was the general character of the feast.

But there were, moreover, particular ceremonies which formed a part of the ritual of the time, which were in themselves beautiful, and which commemorated particular benefits among those which had been enjoyed in the desert. Among these was a ceremony in which libations of water were poured out taken from the pool of Siloe. There seems to have been some ceremony of the kind every morning and evening during the feast, but on the last day there were special circumstances attending the libation, which gave that particular rite a more solemn meaning and significance. The benefit of Providence which was

specially commemorated by this libation was the miraculous supply of water from the rock, of which St. Paul speaks as the spiritual rock which followed them, according to the tradition that it moved from place to place as the camp itself moved. 'They drank,' he says, 'of the spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.'[4] On ordinary days during the feast the water drawn from the fountain of Siloe was carried in procession round the altar of burnt offering, and while this was done the words, 'You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains,'[5] were recited, and finally the water was poured out over the sacrifice on the altar.

On the last day there was a procession of the priests and levites, who carried in their hands branches of palm and citron, and sang the great psalm of Hallelujah, with an accompaniment of musical instruments. It was this ceremony of which our Lord took hold, as was His wont always with the things that were passing before His eyes, and the eyes of the people to whom He was speaking, for the purpose of uttering the remarkable words about the rivers of living water which should flow from those who believed in Him, meaning, as St. John tells us, to promise the Holy Ghost to those who should believe in Him. As we shall see, this was not probably the only occasion during the feast that our Lord seized on ceremonies or other incidents passing before the eyes of the people for the sake of drawing from them some holy lesson, or making some gracious promise. St. John takes the ordinary incidents of the feast for granted, and is only intent on recording our Lord's own words on this and other occasions of the same kind. It would seem that our Lord, Who

[4] 1 Cor. x. 4. [5] Isaias xii. 3.

witnessed this beautiful ceremony with the crowd assembled in the Temple, took occasion to apply it, as was His wont, to the spiritual treasures which were stored up in Himself, and were to be most freely imparted to all who believed in Him. He made the scene another occasion for claiming their faith, and making a wonderful promise as the reward for faith. 'If any man thirst let him come to Me and drink.' These words were a simple application to Himself of the words of Isaias, which were solemnly chanted in the procession itself. The priests and levites sang, 'You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains,' that is the fountain of Siloe, which signified the Messias, and the same prophet had said, in words very familiar to them, 'All you that thirst, come to the waters.'[6] Our Lord seems to join these two texts together, when He says, 'If and man thirst let him come to Me and drink, and He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

It is not meant that Scripture had prophesied the imparting of the Holy Ghost under this particular image as the reward of faith in our Lord. The meaning seems to be that any one who heard our Lord and accepted the truth of His claims, would be fulfilling the command of which the Scripture spoke in the famous passage of Deuteronomy, which contains the promise of the great prophet like unto Moses, whom God would raise up to them from their own kindred and nation. 'Him shalt thou hear. And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him, and He that will not hear His words that He shall speak in My Name, I will be the

[6] Isaias xlix. 1.

revenger.'[7] Any one, therefore, who would listen to our Lord was to receive the Holy Ghost in due time, as our Lord now promised, and in so hearing our Lord he would be fulfilling the prediction and promise of the well known passage in Deuteronomy. And the reward of such obedience might be fitly described in the words used by our Lord.

If, however, the words 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters,' are to be understood as conveying an actual promise of Scripture which was to be fulfilled by the imparting of the Holy Ghost, the reference must be to some of those many passages in Scripture in which spiritual gifts are spoken of under the image of streams of water. Thus Isaias had said, 'I will pour water upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon the dry land,'[8] and again, 'He that is merciful to them shall be their shepherd, and at the fountains of water he shall give them drink.'[9] And Zacharias, 'I will pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayer,'[10] and again, 'It shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,'[11] and the rest. But our Lord must be thought, above all, to refer to His own gracious words at the well of Sichar. 'He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst for ever, but the water which I will give him shall become in him a fountain springing up into life everlasting.'[12]

'Of that multitude, therefore, when they heard these words of His, some said, this is the Prophet indeed. Others said this is the Christ. But some said, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the Scripture say that Christ cometh of the seed of

[7] Deut. xviii. 18. [8] Isaias xliv. 3. [9] Isaias xlix. 10.
[10] Zach. xii. 10. [11] Zach. xiv. 8. [12] St. John iv. 13, 14.

David, and from Bethlehem, the town where David was? So there arose a dissension among the people because of Him. And some of them would have apprehended Him, but no man laid hands upon Him.'

St. John thus describes in a few words the confusion of opinion concerning Him. He had apparently referred to the Prophet promised by Moses, and some thought He was the promised Prophet. Others went further, and declared that He must be the Christ, for there does not seem to have been any formed tradition that the Prophet and the Christ were to be one and the same Person. Then there came up the objection about Galilee. It was one point that He was from Galilee and another still that He was not, as they thought, from Bethlehem, and not connected with the family of David. At the same time the power of His preaching, the presence of the people who favoured and admired Him, and also the invisible force by which all attacks on Him were continually foiled and prevented from taking effect, kept Him safe from the designs of those who would at once have proceeded to extremities against Him, even though these were the rulers themselves.

St. John then passes to what was going on among the Jewish rulers themselves, at the time that the people were thus discussing our Lord. He tells us of the issue of the mission of the officers of the chief priests to apprehend Him. They simply returned without having effected anything at all. 'The ministers therefore came to the Chief Priests and Pharisees. And they said to them, Why have you not brought Him? The ministers answered, Never did man speak like this Man. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in

Him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed.' There was, therefore, a break down in the measures of apprehension, the officers being not only afraid to act, but themselves under a kind of holy spell which fell on the hearers of our Lord when their malice was not great enough to steel them against all spiritual influences. The officers confessed that never man spake as our Lord, probably being impressed by the singular majesty and inherent authority of His manner, as was commonly the case. The Pharisees were in sore perplexity. Their answer about the rulers and the Pharisees and the multitude whose ignorance of the law made them accursed, shows rage rather than even the appearance of reasoning. It was no reason for arresting our Lord or any other teacher, because no one of the rulers or of the Pharisees had believed in Him. Strong measures, like the use of authority for the arbitrary imprisonment of a teacher, required some definite charge and crime to justify them.

But there was still a further element in their discomfiture on this occasion. One of their number, timid as he was, still ventured to put in a remonstrance on the score of the justice of the law. Our Lord was practically being judged and condemned unheard. This gave Nicodemus an opportunity for remonstrance which, feeble as it was, was enough to put an end to the discussion. 'Nicodemus said to them,' he that came to Him by night who was one of them, 'Doth our Law judge any man, unless it first hear him and know what he doth?' The argument was unanswerable. Our Lord once in the hands of His enemies, it might have been feared that if their malice were allowed to have its own way with Him,

He would soon have been put to death, if not publicly at least privately. The cause was settled in their minds, whereas there had been no trial or interrogation of our Lord, no examination of His own statement concerning Himself, no investigation as to His conduct. The authorities could not answer Nicodemus, much as they disliked and resented his interference. His question disconcerted their plans, and the claim he put forward for justice could not be met. They turned upon him savagely, but they could proceed no further against our Lord for that time. 'They answered and said to Him, Art Thou also a Galilean? Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not. And every man returned to his own house, and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.' Thus it often happens, that a few simple words of truth spoken courageously, even by one who is almost alone in his convictions, may prevent for the time a great outrage on justice on which a number of persons are bent while their consciences are ill at ease.

CHAPTER XII.

Our Lord and the Adulteress.

St. John viii. 2—11; *Story of the Gospels*, § 92.

After spending the night either at the friendly house of Martha and Mary at Bethany, or on the mountain of Olivet in prayer, our Lord was again in the Temple very early in the morning. The sacrifices and ceremonies of the Temple service began very early, but our Lord probably anticipated them in His readiness to teach the people, who were drawn to Him by the irresistible attraction of His charity and sweetness, and the power of His teaching. He was there, we may suppose, before the sun rose over the mountain, for the incident which occurred after He had been teaching some little time seems to have been over before that time. 'The people came to Him, and sitting down He taught them.' This was the time when He could most freely and easily instruct them in the many moral points of which they were so much in need, and it might have been hoped that He might have had a quiet hour or two before His teaching could be interrupted by any of the captious questionings and objections of His enemies. We never find any reluctance on the part of the simple people to be ready to hear Him whenever they had the opportunity, and there must have been many simple and pious souls in Jerusalem at that time who would

correspond faithfully to the holy instructions which He was ever ready to impart.

However, on this morning the quiet time of instruction was soon to be broken in upon. Our Lord must have taught ordinarily,when it is not mentioned that He taught elsewhere, in what was called the court of the women, that is, the part of the Temple from which they were not excluded, not a part of the sacred precincts reserved for them alone. It was one of the parts of the Temple to which all Israelites of both sexes had free access, and therefore the most public part, and the most fit for instructions such as those given by our Lord. The people, a crowd of both sexes, were gathered round Him, we may suppose, in a large circle, when suddenly there was a commotion on the outskirts of the crowd, and a party of men made their way into the space before our Lord. It was soon seen who they were. Their dress and bearing pointed them out as belonging to the priestly class. Some of them were well known Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law. They had with them a poor woman who was evidently their prisoner, in a state of great confusion and disgrace. The party made their way to our Lord, and then made their statement explaining the object of the interruption. 'And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto Him a woman taken in adultery, and they set her in the midst, and said to Him, Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou? And this they said tempting Him, that they might accuse Him.'

We have more than once had to mention the deplorable truth, that the morals of the Jewish

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nation generally were at this time in a very low state, and that the sins of sensuality in particular were common even among the priests of the sanctuary. In such a state of public and common morality it was very natural, and indeed inevitable, that the punishments of the law against sins of the kind of which this poor woman had been guilty could not be inflicted. A law such as that by which Moses enjoined the punishment of adulterers, could not well be enforced in a nation of adulterers, even if it had not been the case, as seems not improbable, that the Roman dominion had put an end to such exercises of the power of inflicting capital punishment among the Jews. The case of this woman was no uncommon one, and from that very fact it must have been common that it should be passed over without severe punishment. But the case gave the enemies of our Lord an opportunity of embarrassing Him, as they thought, by asking Him what should be done. They hoped to put Him in contradiction with the Law of Moses. It was one thing for an offence against which Moses had decreed a severe penalty to be passed over commonly in silence, or with some slight punishment, and quite another for a teacher in the Name of God publicly to declare that it was not to be punished as the law ordained. They hoped, therefore, to entangle our Lord in a difficulty out of which He could find no way of escape. Either He would have to say that the law must take its course, and then He might be accused of severity or even of assuming a power which was not allowed to the Jews, or He would have to say that the law was not to be executed, and then He might be accused of modifying by His own authority the Law of Moses. They probably expected that He would assume some

power of relaxing the law, as He had seemed to them to do the same in His action concerning the observance of the Sabbath in the case of the impotent man at the pool. For His well known character for clemency and condescension would prevent them from thinking that it was likely that He would insist on the rigour of the Law.

'But Jesus bowing Himself down wrote with His finger on the ground.' He neither answered their question nor openly declined to give it an answer. It was a question that they had no right to ask Him, for they were themselves the lawful authorities, and He had never interfered with their authority. He had never claimed to be a ruler or a judge, although He had inherent in Himself the full power of all rule and all judgment. He made as if He did not hear. We are not told what it was that our Lord wrote, and there have been many conjectures hazarded with regard to this matter. It does not seem that the persons who were addressing Him, and who continued their questions after He had stooped down, thought that He was writing anything that it behoved them to read, or that had in itself any interest for them. If that had been the case, they would probably have endeavoured to find out what it was that was written on the ground. It seems therefore that they understood the action of our Lord as a simple method of taking no notice of the question which had been put to Him, without directly refusing to give it His consideration. The Prophet Jeremias had said, 'Those who depart from Thee, O Lord, shall be written on the earth,'[2] meaning apparently that they should be of no account and leave no name behind them, or perhaps

[2] Jerem. xvii. 13.

should not be written in Heaven. It may well be thought that our Lord meant to turn their minds to that text of the Prophet, and thus, without reproaching them or manifesting His knowledge of their interior state in any manner that might expose them to public shame, make them enter into themselves and consider whether there would not be the gravest incongruity if a party of men guilty themselves of the very sin with which this woman was now charged, should take upon themselves to inflict on her the punishment of which they were not less deserving than herself. An evil conscience is always suspicious, and it might have occurred to them that He was writing the record of their own transgressions, but there is no evidence that it was so. They did not cease, however, from questioning Him. 'When therefore they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself and said to them, He that is without sin amongst you, let him first cast a stone at her.' It was as if He had said: It is not a question as to the Law, which you have quoted from Moses. It is a question about the execution of the sentence of the Law. Let him who is without sin among you be the man to begin.

As we see, in the account of the stoning of St. Stephen in the Acts, it was the business of the witnesses to take a prominent part in the execution. The words of our Lord at once reminded them of this, and also spoke to their interior consciences, without a single word of reproach or denunciation of any person among them, reminding each by the witness of his own heart of his unfitness to take any share in the carrying out the sentence. 'And again stooping down He wrote upon the ground.' He appeared to be occupied altogether in something

perfectly immaterial, His eyes did not even rest upon them, so that they were free to withdraw or not without notice from Him. He could not seem to mark who went first and who remained longest, all was left to themselves. 'But they hearing this went out one by one, beginning at the eldest,' and we may suppose that the powerful grace of our Lord for once found admission into their hearts, and that after one or two had departed, the remainder had no hesitation in following their example. It was in truth a great victory of grace for them all, even though there may have been other feelings and motives mixed up and influencing their conduct. For the moment, they were under the silent but most powerful influence of the Teacher, Whom they had been endeavouring to entrap. Each one as he moved away made a practical confession that he was no better than the poor victim of her own or another's lust who was standing trembling before Him, or rather their sin was greater than hers, on account of their position as teachers of the people. Thus their plot had altogether failed. In the first place, our Lord had freed Himself from their captious question. He had not said a word against the Law of Moses. He had only spoken of the decency to be observed in its execution. In the second place, He had spared the character and reputation of every one among them, for He had marked no one out from the rest, and if they had been accused it had been by their own conscience alone. Lastly, He had accomplished an act of the greatest mercy and compassion towards the poor sinner, who had been freed from the penalty of her crime, not by any indulgence or relaxation of the law, but by the absence of any one who could come forward to accuse her. She was spared against

all hope, and at the same time she had been brought across the influence of the Good Shepherd Himself, from Whose flock she had strayed so miserably, she had fallen under His loving eye which could convert the sinner by a glance, she had felt His mercy in the saving her temporal life, and was so prepared for its further exercise in the saving her from a repetition of her sin.

'Then Jesus lifting up Himself said to her, Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither will I condemn thee, go and sin no more.' He spoke with the utmost tenderness and compassion, saying nothing at all of her guilt, but only asking for her accusers. That was the strict right on which her liberation was based, the absence of any one to support the charge against her. It was not our Lord's business to bear witness against her, nor had He witnessed her crime, though His eyes had been on her all the time. He does not declare her innocent, but she has a right to go free, because there is no proof alleged against her. 'Neither will I condemn thee, go and sin no more.' The last words are the one single note of reproach which He uttered against her. He, the one there present Who might have cast a stone at her, if innocence was the qualification for taking a share in her punishment, refuses of His own mercifulness to have anything to do with the infliction of the penalty of the law. He came not to destroy, but to save, not to kill, but to make alive, to seek and to save that which was lost. And now He had not only saved her from a violent and miserable death, but He had saved His own calumniators and enemies from burthening their own consciences with a fresh sin.

He had struck into their hearts, and the hearts of all the bystanders who witnessed what passed, a feeling of compunction and remorse at the deep impurity which prevailed all around them, even in the Holy City, and even among the ministers of the sanctuary and the teachers and administrators of the Law of God.

It is easy to see that our Lord does not here teach that crimes such as that of adultery are not to be punished, or that a judge must not, in the discharge of his duty, pronounce sentence against persons for crimes of which he himself may have been guilty. But He teaches certainly the very grave indecency of such condemnations, an indecency which is witnessed to by the common sense and feeling of mankind, who would hardly tolerate a state of things in which such violations of moral propriety were frequent, and which would soon lead to an universal contempt of the Law and its official administrators. He does teach most forcibly the rule which He had laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, in His words about the mote in the eye of our brother and the beam in our own, and if His words do not extend to a prohibition of legal severities, they at all events strike the social and moral condemnations of which society is so full. St. Paul may have had this anecdote in his mind when he wrote the burning words which occur early in the Epistle to the Romans, 'But if thou art called a Jew, and restest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more profitable, being instructed by the Law, art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that sit in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants having

the form of knowledge and of truth in the law—thou therefore that teachest another, teachest not thyself, thou that preachest that men should not steal, stealest, thou that sayest men should not commit adultery, committest adultery, thou that abhorrest idols, committest sacrilege,'[1] and the rest.

It seems hard to conceive that these men, the ministers of the temple and the teachers of the people, should have put themselves forward so thoughtlessly to bring this woman before our Lord, for the sake of satisfying their own animosity against Him, and not have reflected on the extreme inconsistency of which they were making themselves guilty, in practically becoming the accusers of one whose sin was certainly not greater than their own, and may have been much less in the sight of God. If they went away confounded and covered with shame, they had no one to thank for it but themselves. There are many children of the world who shrink from taking a part against sinners when they know themselves guilty of the same sin, whose natural sense of right restrains them from abusing others for the faults which are common in their own lives. Yet these enemies of our Lord seem to have had no shame in their accusation of the woman, and in their endeavour to make her case a means for an attack on our Lord, until they found themselves suddenly confronted by the reproaches of their own consciences, called into activity by the solemn and yet most considerate and charitable action of Him Whom they were endeavouring to entrap into some statement or action on which they might ground a malevolent accusation. Their blindness to their own depravity seems almost more unintelligible than their malice against our Lord.

[1] Rom. ii. 17—22.

It seems well not to part from this beautiful anecdote, as we have it in our ordinary version, without just noticing the undoubted fact that it is omitted in many of the earliest manuscripts and versions, and by many of the Fathers. This is not the place for a critical discussion on the genuineness of the passage, for which it is enough, in a work like the present, to follow the authority of the Vulgate. But it may be well to remember that it cannot be called uncritical to do this—that rather it is the truest criticism to take in all the elements of a question such as that which has been raised about this passage, instead of limiting ourselves to considerations founded simply on the existing copies or versions, and on the citations or omissions of the Fathers. The vast majority of the manuscripts must have been originally made for the liturgical use of the Sacred Scriptures, and with a view to this use there may often have been reasons which guided the hand of the transcriber, which would not have weighed with him if he had been simply transcribing a volume for ordinary reading. It is far more easy to imagine reasons why this passage, and perhaps one or two more of the questioned passages in the New Testament, should have been deliberately left out of a volume designed for public use, than to imagine reasons for the admission into such a volume of any passage which was not actually ascertained to be the work of the inspired writer to whom it is attributed. There may have been many reasons indeed for the keeping this anecdote in the background, during the ages and in the countries when and where the Church had to wage so difficult a warfare for the defence of, or the introduction of, the true Christian principles about the sanctity of

marriage and the like. Criticism, therefore, does not discharge its duty in an enlightened manner, if it deals with questions relating to such a passage in exactly the same way as if it were a chorus in Æschylus or Euripides. In the case of manuscripts of such ancient authors, there could be no reason why, in a particular case, the whole text of a passage should not be inserted. The argument from its absence is therefore peremptory, as far as the importance of the manuscript can make it so. This is not always the case with manuscripts of the New Testament, which may sometimes have been written with the distinct intention of omitting what it was not expedient publicly to recite.

CHAPTER XIII.

Disputes in the Temple.

St. John viii. 12—20 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 93.

The narrative on which we have been lately occupied, in which the story is related of the woman taken in adultery, is prefixed to a long passage in which St. John gives us a number of successive disputations of our Lord held with the priests and Pharisees in the Temple at this time. These most probably took place on the same day, which had begun with His teaching early in the Temple. We may recall therefore here, what has been already said with regard to the disputations which are thus recorded for us by St. John. They seem to have been, properly speaking, interruptions in the course of His direct and ordinary teaching of the people, caused by the remarks and objections made by His critics, who were most anxious to catch Him in some extreme statement with which they might find fault, on which perhaps they might found a charge, or at all events discredit Him in the opinion of the people. This is the general character which runs through all these short disputations, more or less connected in themselves, which are here preserved for us by St. John.

These dialogues, considered as a whole, have an immense value to us in two ways. In the first place, they contain some most important doctrinal statements

by our Lord concerning His own Divine Person, His relation to His Father, His mission into the world, and also concerning the necessity of faith in the doctrine on these points which He now put forward. If St. John had any special intention in making for us this collection of statements by our Lord, beyond the simple historical object of recording them, it may well be supposed to have been this. In the second place, these relations of disputations with the priests on certain points, and our Lord's whole manner in dealing with these enemies of His, explain to us how it was that, a few months after this time, the Chief Priests had come to the conviction that He would not deny the charge of making Himself the Son of God, the charge which Caiphas finally put to Him, with the solemn adjuration by the living God to answer it plainly. If we had nothing in the Gospels like the series of disputations of which we are now speaking, we should be at fault to discover how it was that His enemies had so far divined His doctrine concerning Himself. For He certainly did not ordinarily put it forward with all the plainness with which it is here proposed.

In the chapter now before us we have the following successive declarations of our Lord concerning Himself. In the first place, He declares Himself to be the Light of the World. The Jews immediately object, without any reference to this particular statement, that His witness concerning Himself cannot be received, and He replies with a declaration concerning the double witness of Himself and His Father, in which a great deal of sublime theology is contained. Then follows a declaration about His going away, and that they shall seek Him and die in their sin, and not be able to come whither He is

gone. Then they ask Him, 'Who art Thou?' and He answers them by speaking of His Father in a way which they do not understand. Then He tells them, or rather the people in general, that when they shall have lifted up the Son of Man, that is, when they shall have put Him to death upon the Cross, they shall know that He is the Christ, and also that He has come from the Father. Then He makes another statement to those who believed in Him, that if they continue in His word they should be indeed His disciples, and know the truth, and the truth shall make them free. This is caught up by the objectors, who say they are of the seed of Abraham, and had never been slaves. Our Lord replies to both statements in succession, by speaking of the bondage of sin, and by showing that they were not the children of Abraham, because they sought to kill Him. In the same words He speaks by way of contrast of His Father and of their father, by whom He means the devil. He goes on to say that the devil is both a murderer and a liar, and implies that they are his children both in lying and in murdering, because they seek to kill Him, and because they will not welcome the truth which He speaks to them.

His critics then say that He is a Samaritan, and has a devil, and after answering this He returns to what He had said about the truth making His disciples free, saying that if a man keep His word He shall not see death for ever. On this they close, as it were, with Him, saying that the prophets are dead and Abraham is dead—does He make Himself greater than Abraham? In answer to this, our Lord says that Abraham had rejoiced that he might see His day, and had seen it and was glad. This He further confirms by the solemn declaration, which they under-

stood as it was meant to be understood, of His divinity, 'Before Abraham was made, I Am.' On this they take up stones to cast at Him, but He makes Himself invisible, and passes out of the Temple. This is the series of successive disputations of which this chapter of the fourth Gospel is made up.

Throughout these conversations, our Lord in no way spares His enemies. He tells them they know not whence He comes, or whither He goes. He says they judge according to the flesh, and that they know neither Him nor His Father, that they shall seek Him, and die in their sin of unbelief, that they are from beneath, and of this world, that they are not the children of Abraham, because they do not the works of Abraham, that they are not the children of God, for if they were, they would love Him, but that the devil is their father, and that they will do his desires, both as to murder and as to resisting the truth, that they do not hear the word of God, because they are not of God. He says they have dishonoured Him, and that they are liars. The conversations end, as we see, by their attempt to stone Him. We may now proceed to illustrate the several points of teaching one by one, keeping in mind always that although they lie in the text of St. John as parts of a continuous narrative, it is very probable indeed that they were actually separated by considerable intervals in His teaching, and that therefore it is not necessary always to discover the connection of thought which links them together.[1]

[1] The word 'therefore,' which occurs so frequently at the beginning of these separate divisions of the narrative, must not be understood as implying a direct connection with what goes before. It is like the word 'then' in St. Matthew's Gospel, which simply means, 'once on a time,' as we should say, like the *in illo tempore*, with which the Gospels in Mass begin.

The first of these utterances of our Lord begins abruptly, as it appears to us, with the declaration that He was the Light of the World. If this followed immediately on the incident of the adulteress, and if we are to imagine some external circumstance which may be connected with it, it may be remembered that our Lord had come very early to the Temple, and that the anecdote of the adulteress had occurred almost immediately after the beginning of His teaching. In such a case it might have happened that within a short time of the conclusion of the matter of that poor woman, the rising sun would have shone down over the summit of the Mount of Olives, to the east of the Temple, and this sudden increase of light and splendour might have been turned by our Lord to account, suggesting to Him the comparison in the words about the light of the world. As the discussion which ensues did not relate in any way to this comparison, it is less necessary to be certain whether this was so or not. It may be remembered also that about the same time there would be a great lighting up of lamps for the celebration of the morning sacrifice. We are also told that it was a part of the ritual of the festival, which commemorated all the special benefits bestowed upon the people during the wandering in the desert, to celebrate the marvel of the pillar of fire by which the Israelites were guarded by night, by a procession of torches and candles, and by the illumination of the Temple, and, in a certain measure, of the whole city.

Any of these circumstances may have furnished our Lord with the text of His own office as the Light of the World, on which He might have enlarged with so much beauty, if it had not been for the captious interruption of His enemies, catching hold of His

words the moment He began to speak. We shall have presently an instance of a discourse of our Lord related by this Evangelist, on His own office as the Shepherd of the sheep, in which He was not, as on this occasion, subjected to so much interruption on the part of the Pharisees. That discourse is a great treasure to us, precisely for the reason that He was allowed, more or less, to say what He had in His Heart on the subject on which He spoke. It was not so now. Thus it is that we have lost what might have been a most precious monument, if our Lord had to any extent poured out the thoughts and affections of His Heart on the subject of the true light which enlighteneth every man, as St. John speaks at the outset of this Gospel. But the men with whom He had now to do were little likely to give Him the opportunity of unfolding the beautiful doctrines involved in His words.

'Jesus therefore spoke to them again, saying, I am the Light of the World. He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but hath the light of life.' The words themselves seem to contain an allusion to the blessing which was celebrated at this feast, for they speak of following our Lord as the Israelites followed the cloud that led them by day and the pillar of fire by night. But in that case the steps that were guided were those of the material life, those of the journey from one spot to another on the road marked out for them by God to lead them to the promised land. But the steps that are guided by the light of our Lord, are the steps of those who are pressing on to the true land of promise, the steps of the spiritual life which end in the Kingdom of Heaven and in the possession of God. It was a foolish captious interruption, when the Pharisees

said to Him, 'Thou givest testimony of Thyself, Thy testimony is not true.' It was most true that He spoke with authority, as one who had a right to claim attention and credence. It may be said of all such teachers when they speak concerning themselves, that they give testimony to themselves. But if they have already authenticated their mission by evidences which prove that God is with them and that they speak in His Name, and that He has sent them to teach, then their witness to themselves is true, and rests upon the truthfulness of God. These men determinedly turned a deaf ear to all these evidences of the Divine mission of our Lord. They shut their eyes therefore to the truth that God was manifesting in so many various ways His witness concerning Him.

But it would certainly have been most unreasonable, for One sent like our Lord, not to act and speak authoritatively on the strength of the witness of His Father, which was the appointed evidence of His mission. Not to do so would have been to ignore the action and the counsel of God in carrying out His design for the salvation of the world. In the external sense only, and leaving out of sight the support which He had from His Father's constant witness in His behalf, could it be said that our Lord gave testimony to Himself in any way in which the criticism of the Pharisees could apply. The evidences by which the Father had borne witness to our Lord did not in the least degree add to the ineffable dignity of His Person, to His inherent omniscience, and His infallible veracity. They only added the witness which was required for the authentication of His mission, in all its apparent humility and weakness in the eyes of men. It was not true of

Him—how could it be?—that His witness to Himself was not true. It was only true that, appearing and speaking as a simple Man among men, His statements regarding Himself needed some witness besides His own to force them upon the miserable incredulity and blindness of those to whom He was sent, and this witness was abundantly supplied by His Father Who had sent Him. But He had to listen to these constant cavils, involving the utmost irreverence and disrespect to His dignity, and He meets them now with the utmost simplicity and patience.

'Jesus answered them and said to them, Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true, for I know whence I come, and whither I go, but you know not whence I came, or whither I go.' Our Lord could not but be conscious, both by His Divine knowledge and by the knowledge of His Sacred Humanity, that He was from God and One with God, in nature, and essence, and in all perfection, therefore in all knowledge and in all veracity. There could not therefore be the slightest doubt or question in the mind of our Lord as to His own truthfulness, nor could there be in Him any possibility of error. This rested on His perfect knowledge, both human and Divine, as to His relation to His Father, from Whom He received the Divine essence with all its perfections, and by Whom He is sent as Man, and to Whom He returns after His mission in this world has been accomplished. On the other hand, the Jews to whom He was speaking, notwithstanding all that the Father had done for them in His Providence to furnish them with evidences, which ought to have been far more than sufficient, of the Divine mission of our Lord, did not recognize whence He came or

whither He was to go, that is, did not recognize that He was the Incarnate Son of God, and in consequence were foolish enough to bring against Him this childish accusation that He bore testimony to Himself, and that therefore His testimony was not true, or, as they should rather have said, was not sufficiently authenticated to be received as true. In this sense He had said to them in the former disputation, a year and a half before this,[2] 'If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true,' and He had then gone on to prove to them that the Father had borne witness to Him in many various ways, as by the declaration of St. John Baptist, by His miraculous works, and the Voice from Heaven at His Baptism. All these things proved Him to be sent by God, and therefore that what He said as from God, whether concerning Himself or on any other point, was to be accepted as true, because God could not bear witness to one who spoke falsely. After His veracity had been once established, it was not necessary nor convenient that every single word that He uttered concerning Himself should be accredited by fresh evidences on the part of His Father, and it was absurd to question His authority on any point whatsoever on which He might teach.

In that former discourse, to which our Lord is continually making reference in this, He had spoken also of His power of judging, that being a truth which it was very important for them to recognize. It may be for this reason that He now again makes reference to it, although they had not said anything about judgment. But they had in the most decided and presumptuous manner exercised their own judgment concerning Him, resolving, in the face of all

[2] St. John v. 31.

the evidences which had been accumulated for them, that He was no more than what He appeared outwardly to be, a mere man. He says then, 'You judge according to the flesh, I judge not any man. And if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me.' Here He gives the same reason for the truthfulness and also for the authority of His judgment, if He passes any, namely, His union with, His origin from, and His Mission by, the Father. The mission from the Father would have made His judgment authoritative and true as Man, and His union with the Father in nature and essence made it infallible in itself. Thus He was in Himself in His own Person infallible and authoritative, both in witness and in judgment, and besides that, being in His Human Nature the envoy of the Father and supported by the Father, He had beyond His own inherent authority and veracity, the witness of His Father to secure Him credence and reverence and faith from mankind. This seems to be what He intends them to understand by the words which follow, the meaning of which is somewhat veiled, probably because He knew their malice, and that they were laying wait to catch Him in His words, if He declared openly that He was the Son of God. 'And in your law it is written that the testimony of two men is true. I am One that give testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent Me giveth testimony of Me.'

'They say unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Neither Me do you know nor My Father. If you did know Me, perhaps you would know My Father also.' He was determined to baffle them, seeing the malice of their questions, for it seems clear that they were desirous of getting Him

to state that His Father was God in words which they might lay hold of as the ground of a charge of blasphemy. His words mean that He had a Nature and an existence which they did not recognize, the Divine Nature, in which He was One with His Father, and that as they did not discern in Him this Divine Nature, it was not possible for them to know either Him or His Father. If, on the other hand, they could have recognized His Divinity, then they would have been on the way to a knowledge of His Father as well as of Himself. St. John adds that He spoke these words in the treasury, that is, in the part of the Temple which was most public and open to all, for it was a part to which women were admitted as well as men, as we learn from the anecdote of the poor widow and her mite. It may have been that our Lord was in some measure safer from their attacks where there was most publicity, but in any case the Evangelist notes it as a circumstance worthy of mention that no man laid hands on Him because His hour was not yet come, that is, that He was protected in a marvellous and inexplicable way from their enmity, by the providence of God which would not allow Him to fall into their hands before the appointed time.

St. John next passes to another of the short detached conversations which were so frequent at this time of our Lord's teaching in the Temple. 'Again therefore Jesus said to them, I go and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sin. Whither I go you cannot come.' This is an advance in severity on what He had before said about their not knowing Him. He had used words to the same import the day before, as it seems, when speaking to the officers who had been sent to apprehend Him. But He had

not said to them anything about dying in their sin, for they at least were simply instruments of others, and need not be supposed to have shared the obstinate resolution not to believe, which had taken possession of the minds of the rulers at Jerusalem. Their only idea was to get rid of Him, and to keep things as they then were, they themselves having a large share of power and credit and worldly position under the government of the Romans. Our Lord represents to them their ever increasing danger. The time was short, and they were for making it shorter, during which He would be with them. When that was over, their opportunity would be gone, their time of probation as to the reception of His teaching would be past, and seek Him if they would, they could not find Him, and they would die in their sin.

This would be true in two ways. Faith in Him was the condition of salvation, and of the remission of sins to all, and having missed their time, they would no longer be able to obtain remission. Again, their special sin, which they were nursing and refusing to abandon, intensifying it at every moment during this time of our Lord's presence with them at this great feast, was, as has been said, resolute unbelief, and in this they would grow more and more obdurate, and in this they would finally die. It was characteristic of these Jews that they did not fasten on the words which were of most importance to themselves, the words about the sin in which they would die, but rather on those about our Lord going away and their seeking Him and not finding Him. The Jews therefore said, Will He kill Himself? because He said whither I go you cannot come. In His words to the officers, mentioned in the former chapter, He had spoken of going away and their not being able

to come whither He was going, and the officers had then seemed to take the words of some possible flight of our Lord, betaking Himself to the dispersion among the Gentiles to whom He might intend to preach. But these rulers had in their own minds the death to which they had long ago destined our Lord, and so it came naturally to them to speak of death rather than of any other method of His removal from among them.

'And He said unto them, You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am He, you shall die into your sin.' He puts the impossibility or difficulty of their coming whither He is going, on the fact of their being from beneath, while He is from above, their earthly origin and nature forbidding them from ascending to Heaven, whither in truth He is going. They are of this world, their thoughts and aspirations are of earth, and thus they are not such in quality or character as to be able to soar after Him. They shall die in their sin, if they do not believe 'that I am He,' or, as the Greek words are, 'that I am,' meaning probably that I am He Whom I claim to be, the Incarnate Son of God promised in the prophets. The words, however, are the same as name of God given in Exodus to Moses, when he asked by what name he should speak of God to the people to whom he was sent.[3] But the question which immediately follows seems to show that they did not understand the words in this sense.

'They say therefore to Him, Who art Thou? Jesus said unto them, The Beginning Who also

[3] Exodus iii. 14.

speak unto you.' It is well known that in this place the Greek text differs from the Vulgate version, inasmuch as it does not give the word 'beginning' in the nominative case, but in the accusative, in which it is used in Greek, and in the Septuagint version especially, in an adverbial sense, as if the words had been, 'from the beginning, what also I am saying to you or telling you. I am He Whom I have always said Myself to be.' The great authority of the Latin Fathers, such as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine and St. Jerome, from the last of whom we have this reading of the Vulgate, must always give great weight to the interpretation which is embodied in it, according to which our Lord is thought to assert that He is the principle and beginning of all things, speaking to them in His human nature. In this sense our Lord would be asserting in still clearer and more forcible words His eternal and Divine nature. And some of the commentators who follow this interpretation point out that something of this sort is required for the full and unmistakeable assertion of the Godhead, as if the other expressions, of being sent from God, and being from God, and being with God, and the like, might still be understood in a subordinate sense as of a person merely human. Of course the Greek Fathers as a rule incline to the other interpretation, in which it is almost necessary to take the word 'beginning' in an adverbial sense, either as 'first of all,' or as 'especially,' or as 'certainly,' or in some other similar way. It seems almost inevitable to take the words so if we are to follow the Greek text as we have it. In this sense the words would signify that our Lord, when asked who He was, replied either affirmatively, saying that He was He Who He had always claimed

to be, or interrogatively, as if He had said, What is it that I have said Myself to be from the very beginning of My dealings with you? This is at all events a meaning in strict accordance with the general bearing of the passage before us.

Our Lord went on at once: 'I have many things to speak, and to judge of you. But He that sent Me is true, and the things I have heard of Him these same speak I in the world.' He had said of them already that they did not know either Himself or His Father, and that where He would go they could not come, and that they should seek Him in vain, and that they should die in their sin. He now adds that He could add many more things to these charges and judgments against them, but He implies that for the present He does not say them. He insists on this alone, that He that sent Him is true, the very Truth, and that what He says and has said in the world as sent by Him is what He has heard of Him, and what therefore must share that character of infallible and immutable truth which belongs to Him from Whom He comes and by Whom He is sent. And St. John adds with a kind of marvelling astonishment, that they did not understand that He was speaking to them of His Father. If they could have understood so much, the foundation of their conversion and salvation would have been secured, for they would have received our Lord as speaking in the Name of God, and that would have sufficed for their reception of whatever doctrines concerning Himself or His Mission He might have proposed to them in the Name of His Father.

The words which next follow may have been directly consecutive on the former, but of this we cannot be certain in these reports of St. John. There

is certainly some connection of subject-matter, but the tone of our Lord is more conciliating and less upbraiding than on the former occasion. It seems as if He was inclined to give up the attempt to convert them for the time, and leave them to the hope of what might be after His great Sacrifice was accomplished. 'Jesus therefore said to them, When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He, and that I do nothing from Myself, but that as the Father hath taught Me these things I speak.' The lifting up the Son of Man was the phrase by which on this and on other occasions He spoke of the Death on the Cross, when He did not wish to speak without a certain amount of obscurity, in order not to excite curiosity and provoke questioning. It is as if He had said to them that now they would not listen to Him nor accept the many proofs by which the Father in His Providence had authenticated His Mission, but that the time would come when they would be different. They would lift up the Son of Man, that is, they would bring about His Death upon the Cross, and thus be the external instruments in that great Sacrifice of His by which the world was to be redeemed. Among the fruits of that great Sacrifice would be an outpouring of grace, even upon His enemies, in reward for the consummate obedience which He was to show to His Father therein. Then there would be many among them who would know, by means of the grace then shed abroad, Who He was, and how perfectly He had been in all things the Messenger and Mouthpiece of His Father. The result of the Passion would be the institution of the Church, and her enrichment by the Holy Ghost with all the wonderful powers which would enable her to dis-

charge her loving mission of the application of the merits of our Lord for the benefit of souls. There would be a great diffusion of grace, and great numbers of the Jews, and even of the priests of Jerusalem, would be brought into the true fold.

This then our Lord looks forward to, with joy and consolation, and He holds out the prospect even to His enemies, many of whom would then be made His friends. This shows us how constantly and how lovingly He kept in His Heart the thought of the Sacred Passion. There may also be another strain of thought in the words, as if He might have looked forward to the convincing proof which the Passion and its issues would afford of the truth of His Mission, though at the same time there would be some among them who would not profit by the splendid demonstration, and by the floods of grace which it would let loose over the nation and the world at large, but would be only more hardened thereby. Still they would know the truth of His Mission and of His words, almost in the same way as the devils who believe and tremble, though without the power or the will to be converted. Our Lord ends His passage with a loving expression of thankfulness to His Father, Who had not only sent Him into the world, and given Him the words which He was to speak therein, but had most faithfully guided and tended Him in His Providence. 'And He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things which please Him.' The constant presence and companionship of the Father with the Son in His work upon earth is proved by the truth that He doth always the things which please the Father, having as God one will and one operation with Him, and being in His Sacred

Humanity perpetually guided and moved by the Holy Ghost to do exactly the things at each moment which are pleasing to Him.

'When He had spoken these things, many believed in Him.' St. John seems to wish us to know that the preaching and teaching of our Lord were not without their effect, even in Jerusalem. For among the people who thronged the courts of the Temple to listen to Him, there were multitudes of good and simple souls, who were ready to receive the good seed of the Word of God, although perplexed and harassed by the opposition of their ecclesiastical rulers, whose attitude could not but be a source of bewilderment to such who had been brought up to look to them as their guides in all matters of religion. The things of which the Evangelist writes as having been spoken by our Lord on this occasion, and as having been received with credulity and faith by many, must include not only the disputations with the Pharisees, of which direct mention has been made in his narrative, but also the general teaching and the arguments adduced by our Lord from the various evidences in His favour. His listeners would naturally be exposed to a continual difficulty from the cavils and objections which were made by the Scribes and Pharisees. We must picture to ourselves our Lord as teaching the multitude, or as addressing those who had to some extent declared themselves His disciples, with the Pharisees standing by His side, and interposing their captious remarks whenever they thought it worth while. This will explain more than one apparent difficulty in the discourse as it proceeds. 'Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed, and you

shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' He gives thus a threefold promise to those incipient disciples. If they continue in His Word, that is, in the practice of what He has been teaching them, and in their faith in Him as the Messias, in the first place they shall be His disciples indeed, more and more thoroughly such as time went on, until their following of Him became so close as to penetrate their whole life and character, and gradually gather them into the body which was soon to become a visible community consisting only of disciples of His. This is the first promise.

After this He promises them the knowledge of the truth. The knowledge he speaks of is that perfect familiarity with, and penetration of the Divine truths which He brought into the world, which fills the whole soul with a Divine light, and shows men their relation to God, as well as those things concerning God Himself which it pleases Him to reveal, which enlightens them as to their duties and hopes and prospects, which makes them at home in the position and work to which they are called, delivering them from the bondage of ignorance and the tyranny of human respect and public opinion, and the anxiety of uncertainty and the paralysis of doubt. Above all we may well suppose that as our Lord calls Himself the Way and the Truth and the Life, He may include in this promise of the knowledge of the truth the most precious boon of the knowledge of Himself and all which that knowledge implies. For He speaks presently of their being made free by the Son, after He had added the third promise, that the truth shall make them free.

This promise of freedom has been already partly explained by the commentary which has been made

on the boon of knowledge. It means the elevation of those on whom it is bestowed from the state of servile degradation into which man had fallen by sin, which involved many elements besides the chief element of what St. Paul calls the slavery of sin. For it involved the subjection in which we now live to the consequences of sin, the power of concupiscence, especially if fostered by evil habits of indulgence, the apprehension of misery, and the feeling of distance of God, the fear of punishment, the penal state in which man, even physically, is placed since the fall, of which St. Paul also speaks as the bondage of corruption which enslaves the whole creation. It would be in accordance with the language and doctrine of the same Apostle, if we understand the words also to refer to the bondage of the old Law, which we are delivered from by our Lord, and some of the best Catholic commentators understand the words of our Lord in this sense also. But the slavery chiefly and primarily intended seems to be that of sin, and of the consequence of sin.

The answer to this promise of our Lord seems in truth to have come, not from those to whom our Lord was directly speaking, but from the Scribes and Pharisees who were standing by and listening to the discourse, which was addressed primarily to those who were showing this strong disposition to believe in Him. They fired up at the mention of the gift of freedom, as if it were an insult to their nation to suppose that they were in need of any such boon. 'They answered Him, We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man.' The boast was not very true historically, for there had been the long period of slavery in Egypt, and during

the Babylonian Captivity they had been in a state very nearly resembling that of bondsmen. Except during the period of the Asmonean monarchy, they had since been constantly dependent whether upon Egypt or Syria, and since that time they had been more or less openly under the dominion of the Romans. But it was the policy of their masters to leave them the semblance of self-government in many respects, and even to allow the Jews of the dispersion in the various cities of the Empire a large amount of practical independence. In this sense it may have been a favourite boast among them that they had never been in bondage, and did not need emancipation. 'How sayest thou, You shall be free?' We gather from our Lord's answer, that this interruption came from the bystanders rather than from those whom He was directly addressing. For He passed it by with a word, and then went on with the thought on which He was engaged, and which is the natural sequel to the promise, rather than the answer to the interruption.

'Jesus answered them, Amen, amen I say to you, that whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' We must not be led astray by the change of word in our version, for in the Greek the same word is used when they say we have never been 'slaves' to any man, and when our Lord says that whosoever committeth sin is the 'servant' of sin, and that the 'servant' abideth not in the house for ever, but the 'Son abideth for ever.' The word is the natural and regular contrary to the word free, of which He had made use in the first instance. Here then it seems that our

Lord paused for a moment in His argument to notice the objection made to His words as far as it concerned their repudiation of any need of emancipation. Slaves to men they may not have been, but slaves to sin they must have been, in the sense in which He is speaking of slavery and emancipation. Here He leaves them, and goes on, as it seems, to continue the thought which He was presenting to the persons who were believing in Him. He had spoken of their being made free by the truth. Now He pursues the same thought in His mind, but He makes a rapid and tacit transition which is not at first sight altogether easy to catch. He seems to have before Him the thought of the perfect liberty wherewith they were to be made free by the participation of His own Sonship, according to that which is said at the opening of this Gospel, 'as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God,' true liberty being in essence identical with sonship. 'Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth for ever.'

The connection which is here assumed between the two ideas of liberty and sonship is supplied by St. Paul in the famous passage to the Galatians, which seems to be founded, not exactly on this discourse as related by St. John, but on the Apostle's knowledge of the substance of this promise, and of the doctrine which underlies it. St. Paul argues that there is an immense difference between the servant and the son, and that 'if he is a son, then also an heir through God.' But it is the privilege of the heir to be in his father's house as in his home, with a right to be there which is inalienable, and it seems that it is this privilege which our Lord here speaks of when He contrasts the position of the servant

with that of the son. In the passage in the Epistle to the Galatians to which we refer, St. Paul founds a long argument on the allegory of the two sons of Abraham and their respective mothers, ending by the conclusion, 'So then, brethren, we are the children not of the bondwoman, but of the free, by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.'[4] This freedom is contained in the truth of our adoption as sons, which is conferred upon us by our Lord, Who imparts to us by grace the filial relation to God which is His own by nature. It seems to be this which is in the mind of our Lord when He says, that 'the servant doth not abide in the house for ever, if therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' If this be so, we see how much ground there is for the interpretation of those who see in this passage a reference to the freeing of the Jews who believed from the yoke of the Mosaic Law, and it becomes more likely than it might seem at first sight that our Lord had this liberation in His mind when He spoke of the truth making them free, and of their being free indeed. Moreover, this liberation is the result of the Passion, according to the doctrine of St. Paul in the same Epistle, where he says that our Lord 'hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law,' that is, the curse incurred by all who did not keep the Law, 'being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Our Lord took on Himself this curse, and so annulled the curse which any violation of the Law involved.[5]

He then returns once more to the cavils of His enemies, who had objected that they were the seed of Abraham and had never been in bondage to any

[4] Gal. iv. [5] Gal. iii. 13.

man. They were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, but their boast was just that of the futility of which St. John Baptist had warned them, when he had told them not to begin to say within themselves 'we have Abraham to our Father,' because God was able of the stones before them to raise up children to Abraham. Our Lord insists on the same truth, and moreover adds the terrible truth, on which He speaks at some length, that they were practically the children, not of Abraham or of God, but of the devil. 'I know that you are the children of Abraham, but you seek to kill Me because My word hath no place in you. I speak the things which I have seen with My Father, and you do the things that you have seen with your father. They answered Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man Who hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not. You do the works of your father. They say therefore to Him, We are not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God. Jesus therefore said to them, If God were your Father, you would indeed love Me. For from God I proceeded and came, for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not know My speech? Because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. But if I say the truth, you believe Me not. Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me? He that is of God

heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.'

The whole passage proves the severity with which our Lord was now, as it were, forced to speak and deal with these determined opponents of His, who were endeavouring to turn away from Him the souls who had been disposed to believe in Him in consequence of His preaching. They were treated by Him as sinners against the light. They had had the evidences divinely appointed by God brought home to them, and they had chosen to disregard them, and to deal with Him as an impostor and blasphemer. They had defeated the good counsel of God towards themselves, as St. Luke puts it a little later. But now He was no longer keeping Himself at a distance from them, as He had done for so long. His time was come for preaching in their very presence, and thus the danger to their souls of the mischief they might do to others were most terribly aggravated. He upbraided them therefore with great freedom. He did not hide His knowledge of their murderous designs, and He assigned these designs to their true origin, the father of lies and the murderer from the beginning. They sought to kill Him, because His word had no place in them. To the evidences accumulated for them by the good Providence of God had succeeded the preaching and teaching which those evidences had been intended to authenticate, and now that they had made up their minds to reject the evidences, they could not but turn with savage hostility on the preaching and the Preacher. They had no alternative but to get rid of Him. He spoke to them that which He had seen with His Father, as He had said, and the Father had done His part in supporting the mission of His Son.

Their part was to acknowledge Him as the Messenger of God, and by that acknowledgment not only to place themselves within the pale of salvation, but to help on the great work of God by witnessing to the whole world that it had been authenticated in the most complete way. If His words seem unusually severe, this is the account to be given of their severity. It is not the severity of a man goaded to anger and resentment, for we see all through how calm and even tender He was in the rebukes He was administering. It is the severity of one who sees the immensity and the imminence of the danger to which they were exposing themselves, and so, out of love for their souls, does not spare them the truth. Moreover, the authority of our Lord had already been sufficiently proved to them, and so He could not but speak to them with the dignity and majesty of His Divine Person.

'They said therefore to Him, we are not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God.' They seem to have misunderstood His words about their father, whom He had not yet named. The Scriptural use of the word 'fornication,' suggests the idea of idolatry, and if we follow that sense, the Jews must be understood as priding themselves upon their worship of and belief in the One true God, which was the blessing and characteristic of Abraham. Not that the whole race of mankind was as yet lost in idolatry and polytheism in his time, but he had been chosen by God as the father of the one people among whom the true faith and worship were to be kept up. But our Lord had told them that the proof that God was not their Father was contained in their treatment of and behaviour towards Himself, Who proceeded and came from God, having been moreover sent by

Him. 'Why do you not know My speech? Because you cannot hear My word.' God had promised, of the Prophet Whom He was to send like Moses, 'I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him, and he that will not hear His words which He shall speak in My Name, I will be the revenger.'[6] Our Lord seems to allude to this promise more than once in the course of this series of disputes, and to say that, so far from being able to take in and consider the subject on which He speaks to them and the arguments which it involves, they do not even yet understand the language in which He conveys it. Thus, for instance, when He had spoken about freedom, about the truth making them free, and the Son making them free, they had not been able to conceive the ideas which the words conveyed, and so had misunderstood the words, thinking that they referred to national freedom and independence. When He spoke to them about their doing the works of their father, by whom He meant the devil, they had understood the words as if they related to 'fornication.' It must often happen, that in conversing with unbelievers, or again, with thoroughly worldly people, who have no ideas beyond what is visible and sensual, the ministers of God are unable to find in them any intelligence of a subject-matter which is spiritual and divine. In such cases, the discourse is as much beyond the grasp of the hearer, as when even its language cannot be understood.

However, our Lord proceeded at once to put the matter in very clear words. 'You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do.' This, then, is what He had meant when He

[6] Deut. xviii. 19.

said, 'You do the things that you have seen with your father. You do the works of your father.' He then gives a twofold characteristic of the devil, and so of his works. He is a murderer, and a liar. 'He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father thereof'—that is, the father of lying. Satan's rebellion against God implied the insane desire of the destruction of God. When he misled the thousands of angels who shared in his revolt, he misled them to their own destruction. When he tempted Eve, his desire was the destruction and murder of the whole human race, and as long as the world lasts, he will be occupied in the work, as far as it is permitted him, of murdering souls by sin and of desiring the destruction of those whom he is not permitted to murder. It was he who had inspired the Pharisees with their jealousy and hatred of our Lord, and these suggestions of his had ripened into their design actually to take away His life, a design which was ultimately, and at no great distance of time, to be successful. This design proved them to be his children as a murderer.

Again, as to lying. The devil invented the lying thought which led to the revolt of the Angels, and he seduced our first parents, by a deliberate lie, telling them that they should not die. All the myriads of swarms of lies by which mankind had been deceived ever since, as in the false systems of religion and philosophy of paganism, came from him. And the same is to be said of all the heresies by which the children of the Church have been led astray, as well as of all the false glosses of worldliness, sensuality, and the like, by which men have

been persuaded to disobey the law of conscience and of God. For no sin is ever loved and committed except under the lying mask of something good or something allowable, and no falsehood is ever embraced except under the guise of truth. To arrange and put forward these masks and false pretensions is the peculiar work of the devil. Thus our Lord says of him, first that he 'stood not in the truth.' For God had created him with the light of truth, had given him a supremely powerful and noble intelligence, and had strengthened the immense powers of his natural faculties by wonderful aids of grace. Notwithstanding all, he threw away the truth, and chose a lie. Then He says that 'when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.' The lie is his own child, his own creation, the product of himself alone, which has no origin but in him, and his progeny of lies fills the whole world, not one single falsehood of all having any other progenitor than he.

Our Lord goes on to show that they are the children of the devil as to lying as well as in their murderous designs. Falsehood may be shown in two ways, by lying assertion, and by resistance and opposition to truth. 'But if I say the truth, you believe Me not.' They followed their father the devil, by rejecting the truth when proposed to them by our Lord. He speaks with perfect and Divine knowledge, rather as judging them than as arguing with them. There were three possible reasons by which their rejection of His doctrine might be accounted for. The preacher might be untruthful or unworthy of credit, the doctrine might be unsound, or the hearers might be obstinate and malevolent. But the messenger of God was His Son, and His

authority had been abundantly established, as well as His holiness. This removes the first alternative, which our Lord touches when He says, 'Which of you shall convince Me of sin?' That being removed, it followed that what He asserted was true, yet they did not believe Him. Thus the second alternative, that of the viciousness or unsoundness of the doctrine, was removed also. There remained, therefore, the third. 'If I say the truth why do you not believe Me?' Why, indeed, except that you are yourselves evil. 'He that is of God heareth the words of God, therefore you hear them not,' not because I am wicked or my doctrine untrue, but 'because you are not of God.'

They had no answer to make to Him now but mere abuse. 'The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, Do we not say well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?' It is hardly worth while to inquire what there may have been in our Lord on which these absurd charges were founded. The Samaritans were the most powerful and the most hated of all those whom the Jews looked upon as heretics and perverters of the truth, opponents of the Law and the ancient traditions of their religion, for they differed from the heathen in this, that they professed to worship the God of the Jews and to follow the original law of the Jews. Thus to call our Lord a Samaritan was to call Him, as we should say, a heretic, as distinguished from an unbeliever. The charge of having a devil may have been a form of the calumny about casting out devils through Beelzebub, or they may have fastened upon His claims to Divine power and honour, or on something in His teaching which they did not understand.

Our Lord, with great calmness and condescension,

answered each of these malignant charges. Jesus answered, 'I have not a devil, but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me.' They had charged the Incarnate Son of God with being a demoniac, and, if the charge about being a Samaritan is to be understood as has been explained above, with teaching or acting against the honour of the true God. The denial that He is a demoniac meets their second charge, the assertion that He honours His Father meets the other. The word honour[7] is the proper word for the honour paid to a father by a son. Our Lord asserts that He pays this honour to His Father in all that He does and says as His Messenger, and then He retorts the charge on them, because the Father's will is that they should honour Him in His Human Nature as sent by Him. He refers to His own words to them in the former disputation, related in the fifth chapter of this Evangelist, in which He had said that the Father had given all 'judgment to the Son, that all might honour the Son as they honour the Father, and that He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father Who had sent Him.'[8]

'You have dishonoured Me. But I seek not My own honour.' He did not choose to punish them for their dishonour, for that would have been inconsistent with the whole character of His present mission in the world. 'There is One that seeketh and judgeth,' that is, the Father, to Whom My honour is dear, and Who, although He does not at present execute judgment vindictively by way of punishment, still notes silently and places on record the dishonour that is done to Me and the chastisement which it

[7] See St. Matt. xv. 4; xix. 19; St. Mark viii. 10.; Ephes. vi. 2.
[8] St. John v. 23.

deserves.' And then He once more appeals to them with a great promise, which perhaps also contained a great threat. The words may be considered as addressed again to the believing Jews, to whom He had begun this discourse, though they were caught up by the hostile bystanders. 'Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever.' The words refer back to what He had already said about their continuing in His word, and being made free by the truth, and may therefore well be supposed to be addressed to the same persons. The promise here made, of not seeing death for ever, is a continuation and a crown of that former promise. They were to continue in His words and then to be His disciples indeed. They were to know the truth, and the truth was to make them free, and the freedom which they would thus gain would be connected, as He afterwards implied, with something like the adoption of sons, because it would be communicated to them by the Son. And now, as a crown to all, perseverance in obedience to His word is promised immunity from death for ever, that is, those who keep His word will rise hereafter, not to death and condemnation, but to eternal and glorious life.

But now again the cavils of the captious and unbelieving Pharisees are let loose upon Him. They catch up these words also, as if He had declared that those who kept His word were never to die. 'The Jews therefore said, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and Thou sayest, If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost Thou make Thyself?' Thus

they drew from our Lord a still plainer declaration than before. 'Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father Who glorifieth Me, of Whom you say that He is your God, and you have not known Him, but I know Him, and, if I shall say I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him, and do keep His word.'

He takes first of all the charge now made against Him of exalting Himself. 'Whom dost Thou make Thyself?' He replies that as man He can have little power to glorify and exalt Himself, for man can do but little to gain glory. But the Divine works and words which the Father gave Him to do and to speak, these could not but glorify Him. But it is the Father, as He has said before, Who thus glorifies Him, not He Himself. This glorification of our Lord by His Father ought to have been familiar to them. 'You say that He is your God, and you have not known Him,' for the whole operation of the Father for the manifestation and exaltation of His Son has been lost upon you. It is a clear proof that He must be unintelligible and undiscernible to you in His action on the world, by which He means men to know Him, that so magnificent an instance of His Providential dealings for the benefit of mankind should have been so utterly unacknowledged by you who call Him your God. Moreover, to know God implies the keeping of His Law, it implies the love of God as well as the barren knowledge, as St. John says that he that saith he knoweth God, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar.[8] This seems to be in our Lord's mind, for He goes on, 'I have known Him, and if I shall say I know Him not, I shall be like

[8] 1 St. John iii. 4.

you, but I do know Him, and do keep His word,' the whole life of our Lord being one of obedience to the Father, and on that account an infinite glorification of the Father.

Then our Lord turns to the other point of their objection, that He had said that if any man kept His words he should not see death for ever, whereas Abraham and the prophets were dead. They were servants most dear to God, and yet they had tasted death. The Jews meant to imply that our Lord was making Himself greater than Abraham and the prophets, by saying that a man would never die who kept His word. Our Lord tells them clearly in reply that Abraham was one of those who had kept His word, and had not died for ever. The proof of this was that Abraham had seen His day, and was glad. 'Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day, he saw it, and was glad.' That is, as it seems, it was a matter of immense rejoicing to Abraham that he received the promise of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and looked forward, at the time when that promise was made, with great desire and longing, to the moment when it would be fulfilled. That moment came, in the course of ages, and Abraham, in the resting-place of the departed saints, had known of it, and he had rejoiced again at the knowledge. He rejoiced, therefore, that he was to see it, and he rejoiced that he did see it. The day of our Lord seems thus to signify His Incarnation, which shed a flush of joy over the whole creation, and was no more hidden from the saints in Limbus than from the blessed angels in Heaven. Our Lord is continually implying that in Himself the prophecies are fulfilled, as in this same disputation He has already alluded to the promise of the

prophet like unto Moses. Here He claims that in Himself are fulfilled the prophecies and promises made to Abraham and the Patriarchs.

The Jews were stung to fury by these words, which involved, not obscurely, the claim that He was indeed a greater than Abraham. 'The Jews, therefore, said to Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?' The number fifty seems to have been commonly used as noting the attainment of middle age, and the words do not of necessity imply any opinion as to the actual age of our Lord at this time, though they seem to have been made the foundation in very early times of a tradition that He was about forty when He died. There is also some difference in the Greek reading, the word being forty instead of fifty in some copies. The enemies of our Lord pervert His words, making Him say that He has seen Abraham, whereas He had only said that Abraham had seen 'His day.'

There can be no doubt at all about the meaning of our Lord's answer. 'And Jesus said to them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, before Abraham was made, I am.' He speaks of His Divine and Eternal Existence, which has no beginning, no measure, no end, one infinite Being and Life, and the source of all such being and life as are imparted to creatures, who come into existence at a certain time only, and live afterwards a partial and dependent existence, which by the side of the Eternal Being of God is as nothing. Before Abraham became, began, entered on such existence as he has, I am. Nor can there be any doubt as to the manner in which the words were understood by those to whom they were spoken. For St. John goes on, 'They therefore took up stones to cast at Him,' as if they had heard blasphemy and

were bound at once to inflict on it the appointed punishment.

But, again, the time for His death had not come. 'Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple.' He might have struck them with blindness, or paralyzed their arms, or in some other way chastised them for their sacrilegious thought. But it was enough for Him to withdraw from their sight, which He did, either by making Himself invisible, or concealing Himself in some way in the crowd which was listening to the disputation. While they were seeking Him, He quietly passed out of the Temple, and then immediately followed up the words, in which He had declared Himself to be God, by a most stupendous miracle, wrought without any solicitation, on one of the poor sufferers who were brought daily to beg for alms at the gate of the sanctuary. His enemies may hardly have ceased from their search after Him, hardly have laid down the stones which they had taken up to cast at Him, before the rumour reached them that He had proved His Divine power by the perfect cure of a man who was well known to have been blind from his birth. This was the Divine answer to their thoughts, charging Him with blasphemy.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Man born blind.

St. John ix. 1—41 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 95.

The incidents at the close of the last chapter were enough to decide the question, if such a question could have been in doubt, whether the Jewish priests would or would not receive the preaching of our Lord, would or would not exert their great material power for or against His Mission. The breach between them was now as wide as it had been on the former occasion, after the miracle on the impotent man at the pool, when it had become necessary for our Lord, unless He was prepared to drive them to extremities, to retire altogether from Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. They had taken up stones to cast at Him, and the execution of their crime was only prevented by a preternatural power protecting Him. But the incidents which were to characterize this visit of our Lord to the feast of Tabernacles were not yet exhausted. There was to be a yet further instance of His wonderful mercy and miraculous power, which might have been enough to convert even the most obdurate among them, but which was to have a contrary effect, in still further exasperating them. This was this providentially arranged incident of the cure by our Lord on the Sabbath-day of the man born blind—one of the greatest and most striking of all His miracles, one

the splendour of which far eclipsed the former miracle of the cure of the impotent man.

'And Jesus passing by, saw a man who had been blind from his birth.' It must be supposed that the man in question was well known in the city, for the disciples seem to have known not only that he was blind, but that he had been so from his birth. Such inflictions are naturally enough the subject of questions in any unreflecting mind, for we are all inclined to think, what is indeed in a sense true, that all such defects are the consequences of sin in some person or other. For they certainly would not be in the world unless sin was in the world, and when they are found inflicted on persons whom we must suppose to have been guiltless, they arouse surmises in the mind as to the justice of God. Men readily think or feel as if all had a right to the full use of their natural faculties, as if they were our natural birthright, and they proceed to reason, in cases like that before us, as if there must be some inconsistency, even some injustice and unfairness, in the providential order of the world, as it regards individuals who are deprived, for whatever reason, of what other men possess, unless their condition may be considered as the punishment of some fault. 'His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?'

Some writers have pointed out an inconsistency in the question, as if it implied an absurdity, for how could a man sin before he was born? This apparent absurdity has led some to suppose that the disciples spoke with some vague ideas in their mind about the possible transmigration of souls to the present from a former existence, in which they may have sinned, and so incurred the penalty of inferior

positions or unusual disadvantages in this life. This opinion is said to have been held by some of the Jewish sects. But it seems unnecessary to imagine any well developed reasoning in the minds of the disciples here. They might ask the question without any definite theory as to what was possible. Men are always ready enough to attribute calamity to sin, and they may simply have asked whose sin it was in this case without more reflection. Or again, the question may be understood as nothing more than inquiry whether it were really true, that such an infliction was necessarily the punishment of sin, either in the man or in his parents. Our Lord's answer not only contained the refutation of the false supposition, that there must have been sin either in the child or in his parents, but also threw a new light upon the principles of the Providential government of men's lives, by showing that some disadvantages and calamities were allowed to exist in order that the glory of God might be served thereby. 'Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him,' that is, the Providential reason for the affliction is to be found in the design of God, that His work should be made manifest in this man by occasion of his affliction.

The words which follow are very naturally connected with the circumstances under which the miracle which was now to take place was to be worked. For our Lord could not be ignorant of the intense hostility against Himself which would be excited to a fresh flame if He worked the miracle, especially as it was the Sabbath-day. There might have been numberless reasons of prudence suggesting that He should not work the miracle—of which

no one seems to have thought but Himself—or at least delay it until a time when the particular element of scandal contained in the fact that it was the Sabbath-day might have been avoided. On the other hand there was the irrepressible charity of His own Sacred Heart urging Him on to the relief of the poor sufferer. He might also take into account the great effect which a miracle of such a class might have on the simple people, who would immediately become aware of it, and on the many thousands of pilgrims from distant parts who were at that time present in Jerusalem. He saw in this that glory of God, which He had assigned as the reason for the affliction which was now to be removed. Our Lord always acted under the Divine guidance of the Holy Ghost, making known to the Sacred Humanity the special decrees or intentions of the Father, and there must have been present to His mind something of this kind to press Him on to the good work, which, in the eyes of the people, would be the one most memorable event of the days of the festival. Moreover, He may have intended to connect the miracle immediately with the words He had just uttered, which implied His Divinity.

'I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.' He had spoken shortly before to the Jews about the time when He would be no longer with them, no longer within their reach, even if they sought for Him. Now in the same spirit He reminds Himself, so to say, that His time is short, and that He must work before it is over. His own day for working miracles was fast drawing to a close, for He was within half a year of His Passion, after which we do not read of any miracles of healing wrought by Him. And per-

haps He was willing to leave behind Him this example for the benefit of those who were to come after Him in the Church, and to have the work of God in any form or measure committed to them, that they might learn from Him not to pay much attention to the scandal that might be taken on directly false and wilful grounds, at anything involving the glory of God and the good of man, and also not to let themselves be easily persuaded into putting off a good work of which they have the present opportunity. 'As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.' He goes back to the words He had used shortly before, after the incident of the deliverance of the adulteress, and perhaps He has in His mind a reference to the enlightenment which He was about to confer on the poor blind man, who had never yet seen the light of day, and which was so beautiful a representation of the spiritual enlightenment which He had the power to impart. And then, without more delay, without being asked or entreated in any way, except by the simple sight of the calamity of the blind man, He proceeded to work the miracle in a way which would ensure the attention of all around.

'When He said these things, He spat upon the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him, Go wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted Sent.' We have already seen that the fountain or pool of Siloe was connected with the special commemorations of this festival of Tabernacles, and it is perhaps for this purpose that St. John takes care to point out the meaning of the name for his readers among the Greeks. It is as if our Lord had specially chosen to work this great miracle with some use of the

water of the fountain, which was at this feast drawn daily, carried in triumph to the Temple, and poured out upon the altar. His practice as to the use of means and visible or tangible elements in the working of miracles was various at various times, as if to show His perfect independence in such matters. But He very often seems to have used such means, usually in themselves perfectly inefficient and only having a symbolical or mystical signification. In the present instance He connects the cure with His own Sacred Humanity by the use of the spittle with which He made the clay, while He also sends the blind man to the pool of Siloe, the name of which was significant to the Messias and His Mission.

'He went therefore, and washed and came seeing.' He must have of course had some attendant with him, who usually led him, as it would seem, to the neighbourhood of the Temple, as the man of whom we are told in the Acts of the Apostles, who was taken every day to the Beautiful Gate of the Temple to beg for alms, and who was cured by St. Peter by the invocation of the Name of our Lord. Thus he would know Who it was that had sent him to the pool, and he returned to our Lord after the cure, full of gratitude. His was a well-known face to the frequenters of the Temple. 'The neighbours, therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. But others said, No, but he is like him. But he said, I am he. They said therefore to him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered, The Man Who is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe and wash. And I went,

I washed, and I see. And they said to him, Where is He? He saith, I know not.'

So remarkable a miracle was certain to make itself known. The news spread at once to the rulers, and the man was very soon taken into custody. 'They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them, He put clay upon my eyes and I washed, and I see. Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This Man is not of God, Who keepeth not the Sabbath. But others said, How can a Man that is a sinner do such miracles? and there was a division among them. They say therefore to the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said, He is a Prophet. The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him that he had been born blind, and had received his sight, until they had called the parents of him that had received his sight and asked them, saying, Is this your son who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but how he now seeth we know not or who hath opened his eyes we know not, ask himself, he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed among themselves that if any man should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore did his parents say, he is of age, ask him.' The whole narrative is a perfect instance of the pregnant vivid manner of St. John, putting a picture before the eye

in which characters are drawn with complete clearness and precision in the very words of the persons introduced. Moreover, the language and conduct of the man who had been blind convey to us most truthfully the state of mind in which a great number of the people must now have been, who, if they had not been themselves the subjects of our Lord's miracles, had at least witnessed or heard of them, and become convinced that He was at least a Divine Messenger. This condition of mind, as shown by the sturdy resolution with which the blind man presently maintains his faith, and practically silences the priests themselves, was one of the elements which have to be considered if we are to set before ourselves an intelligible account of the state of the people at this time, inclined on many grounds to believe, perplexed by the attitude of the authorities, and frequently intimidated by their violent action. Of this we shall try to speak hereafter.

There seems to have been various degrees of the punishment which corresponded to excommunication among the Jews. The least severe lasted but for thirty days, but it would probably, in a case like the present, in which the delinquent was supposed to have sinned in the way of heresy or false doctrine, be extended indefinitely in the case of what would be considered contumacy. In this first case the punishment consisted, not in entire exclusion from the synagogue and public offices of religion, but in a certain distance being fixed at which the excommunicated person must remain from others. The other degree of which we hear implied entire exclusion from the synagogue, and also had its effects in private life, for the person was in this case shunned and treated as abominable by all. It is

probable, however, that in the time of our Lord and of the Apostles, and in the case of the poor, the incidental penalties of excommunication were very much greater in point of material disadvantages than the direct penalties incurred by this punishment. For there were large sums of money at the command of the authorities, sent by the Jews from all parts of the world for the assistance of the poor, and the excommunicated person would certainly be excluded from all participation in these. It is very probable that the early Christian converts in Jerusalem, in the time of the Apostles, were thus made to suffer by the Jewish authorities. Thus we find it a constant preoccupation of the Apostles, and of St. Paul in particular, to send supplies of alms to the brethren in Jerusalem and the Holy Land generally, in order to compensate them for this deprivation. If this was the case, then we can easily understand the fear that is evident in these parents of the subject of the miracle, lest they might be considered to share in the offence of which their son was supposed to have been guilty.

After their dismissal, the authorities again examined the man who had been blind, for the purpose of either inducing him to acknowledge the supposed imposture or of inflicting on him the penalty agreed upon in case of any who might confess faith in our Lord. 'They therefore call again the man who had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God.' This was a common adjuration,[1] meaning that the person to whom it was addressed should make a clear confession of his sin. 'We know that this Man is a sinner.' They endeavour to frighten the poor

[1] Compare the case of Achan, Josue vii. 19, the Philistines, 1 Kings vi. 5, and the words of Jeremias xiii. 16.

man by their authority, speaking in the name of the Synagogue as the authorized representative of the Divine power and truth. But the man was firm. 'He said therefore to them, If He be a sinner I know not, one thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see. They said to him, What did He to thee? How did He open thy eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you have heard, why would you hear it again? Will you also become His disciples?' The words are stronger in the original, 'Do you also wish to become His disciples?' 'They reviled him therefore and said, Be thou His disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spake to Moses, but as to this Man, we know not from whence He is. The man answered and said to them, Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this Man were of God He could not do anything. They answered and said to him, Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.'

Thus was the machinery of the ecclesiastical system, established by God Himself for the preservation of purity of faith and for discipline among the holy nation which He had chosen out of the whole world, employed in the condemnation and prescription of a simple soul, whose only crime was that he was prepared to acknowledge the promised Messias, for Whom the whole of that system was a preparation, and Who had manifested Himself by a

great and unheard of miracle of mercy in favour of this man. The sentence of excommunication, which these men now passed on the man who had been blind, was a kind of anticipation of the sentence which was to be passed by the whole assembly of the chief priests and elders in the case of our Lord Himself. It was far more than an act of ecclesiastical tyranny on one poor man. It proclaimed to the whole people assembled for the feast at Jerusalem, that it was henceforth an offence which would be punished by spiritual censure and exclusion from the common rights of the people of God, to acknowledge our Lord to be a Prophet, even after having personally received from Him the greatest possible evidence of the Divine power working with Him, in the form of a stupendous miracle of a class altogether unheard of. It cannot be supposed that such a step on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities could pass unnoticed. On the contrary, it was likely to make a very wide sensation, and to influence very greatly the mass of good men in their attitude towards our Lord. It was an act of open persecution against Him, and at the same time an act of the greatest cruelty to the people.

It derived an increase of importance from the time at which it occurred. Our Lord was now about to begin a fresh enterprise of missionary zeal among the populations of the southern province of the Holy Land. Thus the importance of all that was passing at this feast of Tabernacles can hardly be overrated in the Gospel history. It gave a character and tone to all that followed. We remember how on the former occasion, which most resembles this, that of the mission of the twelve Apostles to preach in some districts of Galilee, we were told of the immense

compassion felt by our Lord for the people, who were, as St. Matthew says, distressed, and lying like sheep who have no shepherd. The action of the authorities at Jerusalem had even then had a great part in the production of the state of things which caused so much compassion to our Lord. For they had already been unfaithful themselves to the duty which was incumbent on persons in their exalted position, the duty of recognizing the finger of God in the manifestations of Divine power by which the mission of our Lord had been providentially authenticated, and of doing their part in preparing the people, first by their own example, and also in other ways, for the reception of the truth concerning Him. They had themselves turned away even then, and instead of exerting their great influence in His favour they had exerted it against Him. Thus they had already begun to incur the charge which our Lord afterwards made solemnly against them, when, at the close of His Ministry, He told them that they shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, they themselves did not enter in, and those that were going in they did not suffer to enter.[1] It is impossible but that even then immense mischief to souls must have resulted.

In the present day, when we read of the Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospel history, our mind dwells chiefly on the fact that they were the deadly enemies of our Lord, and so of God Who sent Him. We think less of their priestly and hierarchical rank, their immense power with the people as the authorized ministers of the sanctuary. The Evangelists always speak of them with reticence, they but seldom remind us of their priestly rank, and of the authority

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 13.

which belonged thereto. Thus we may fail to understand, as it deserves, the immense perplexity of the people, under the circumstances created by this obstinate incredulity of the priests, to whom they were bound, as well as naturally inclined, to look for guidance under the many difficulties which might arise in their minds with regard to the providential dealings of God with His people. Thus, at that former time, the people were left to themselves, sheep without shepherds, at the time when the shepherds set over them might have very materially assisted them in reaping the full benefits of the Mission of our Lord. An incalculable mischief to souls was thus occasioned, by the neglect of the pastors of the people to do their duty.

At the time of which we speak, the case had become still worse. The ecclesiastical authorities were not only ranged, in tacit opposition or unfriendly neutrality, against our Lord. They had taken active steps to brand as an offence against God the recognition of the truth of His Mission. He had now to fight against the prejudices thus created, prejudices which would naturally have much effect upon the very best souls in the population, who would be the most disposed to regard with respect the attitude of their spiritual rulers. Any one who became an adherent of our Lord must count the cost. He had not only to overcome the feeling, natural to good souls, against anything or any person in opposition to the recognized and established authorities in religious matters, but also to brave for Himself and for those who belonged to Him the sentence of excommunication, severe enough in itself, and perhaps still more severe in its effects social and material. We thus find our Lord Himself placed under a ban of proscription as a false teacher

and a pretender, by the authorities who seemed to speak in the name of God, and His followers subjected to positive penalties of no light kind by the same authorities. These were the conditions under which He was now to begin His great missionary work in the part of the country where these priests had the most influence, on account of its near neighbourhood to Jerusalem itself.

Our Lord's first care, under these new circumstances, was for the poor victim of the obstinate bigotry of the Jews. 'Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him, He said to him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?' It would seem that the man had already come to know our Lord, having probably been brought to Him after his miraculous cure. 'He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' Our Lord's answer is most tenderly touching, for it reminded the man of the miracle which had been wrought upon him. 'Jesus said to him, Thou hast both heard and seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.' He had poured into his soul the gift of faith, along with immense gratitude for the mercy which had been shown in his regard, and He had given him courage and constancy in the simple confession which he had made before the Pharisees. There he had but said that he believed his deliverer to be a prophet. And in that he was quite correct, because the exhibition of miraculous powers did not of necessity prove the person who displayed them to be God, but simply to have with him the witness of God as His messenger. But when such a messenger spoke in the name of God, he was to be believed in what he said concerning himself or any one else, and thus it was reasonable in the man before us to

accept our Lord's own statement that He was the Son of God of Whom He spoke. Then he received the further gift of faith in the truth which was thus proposed to him. 'And he said, I believe, Lord, and falling down he adored Him,' adding to the profession of faith, the homage of adoration. It mattered little to him now that he had been excommunicated. He was the first of our Lord's disciples to incur this penalty for the sake of Him, the first of an innumerable army of witnesses and sufferers of the same kind, including, as we may gather from the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Christian community at Jerusalem in the time of the Apostles, as well as all those who in later times have been subjected to ecclesiastical censures by heretical and schismatical usurpers of the powers of the Church. A great part of the sufferings of the Catholics in England and Scotland in the times of persecution came from the infliction of those ecclesiastical penalties by the intruded Bishops and others, and to this very day the ban of social and domestic proscription, which falls on converts from Established Protestant Churches, is often as severe in its effects as this excommunication of the Jews.

'And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into the world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind.' He had come into the world, not indeed to judge the world, for the time for that had not come, and was to come hereafter. But the effect of His coming was to divide men judicially into two camps, as holy Simeon had said to our Lady at the time of her Purification, that He was set for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed. This was the judgment

for which He had already once given thanks to His Father, and for which He was again soon to thank Him after the success of the mission of the seventy-two disciples—that He had hid the things of the Kingdom from the wise and the prudent, and had revealed them to little ones. He takes His image in this place from the miracle which He had just wrought, and He says that He had come into the world that those who did not see might see, and those who did see might become blind, instead of speaking of the wise and prudent, and of the revelation of the truth to little ones. As the man before Him had received the light of day, revealing to him the whole wonders of the world of sight which had before been hidden from him, so the rude and simple and ignorant, as they seemed to be, had received and were to receive the blessed light of faith, which would lay open to them a far more magnificent world, in which the glory and the greatness and the mercifulness of God would be made manifest to them in revelations of ever increasing beauty. And the learned and the wise, as they were counted in the opinion of the world, the rulers of the people, who professed themselves the guides of the ignorant and lights to the blind, they, in their arrogance and self-conceit, and in their unwillingness to believe in a Teacher Who reproved their evil lives, turned away from the truth which was set before them by God, and became blind with a blindness only more deplorable because they were absolutely unconscious of it.

And many of the Pharisees who were with Him heard, and they said unto Him, Are we also blind? 'Jesus said to them, If you were blind you should not have sin, but now you say, We see, your sin

remaineth.' The thought which seems to lie under these words seems to be that of the two kinds of seeing, of seeing outwardly, without discernment, which is wilful and therefore sinful, and of seeing outwardly and discerning inwardly, which is willing and meritorious. In the same way there are two kinds of blindness, the one which is an absence of opportunity of seeing and discerning, and in which, therefore, the not discerning was the result of the want of opportunity, and the other which was to be found in those who had shut their eyes wilfully to the light. If the priests had had no opportunity of knowing our Lord, if they had not had the various witnesses of His miracles and words, of the testimony of St. John, and the other testimonies of which He had before spoken to them, they would have been blind in the way which implied no sinfulness, and their want of knowledge of Him would have been involuntary. But they had had all these means of grace and conviction presented to them, and they acknowledged this by declaring their inefficiency. They did not deny His miracles, they did not deny His arguments, they did not deny the witness of St. John. They put their own interpretation on these, but that was an acknowledgment that they had had these evidences before them. So their sin remained, for no sin of whatever kind could be forgiven them, while they persevered in their obstinate incredulity. And that incredulity was in itself a sin inasmuch as it was wilful, and it remained, because they continued in it wilfully, instead of yielding to the new display of miraculous power which they had only just witnessed. For them this miracle, worked almost before their eyes, was as if it had never been, except that it had hardened them and forced them to act upon the

resolution which they had come to of casting out of the Synagogue any who became a believer in our Lord. The words of which we speak should be compared with others in which our Lord afterwards described the sinfulness of these Pharisees in His last discourse to the Apostles after the Last Supper. 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin, but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father.'[2] They hated Him Who spoke to them, and they hated the Father Who bore witness to Him. For they rejected the teaching of the one and the witness of the other.

[2] St. John xv. 22—24.

CHAPTER XV.

The Good Shepherd.

St. John x. 1—21; *Story of the Gospels*, § 96.

The sin of which the priests of Jerusalem had been guilty, and which they had renewed and intensified by their treatment of the man on whom this last miracle had been worked, was not simply a sin of obstinate incredulity, as it might have been in any of the common people who might have refused to accept the evidence of miracles in favour of our Lord. They were not of the common people. They were men in authority, which had been received from God, and they were responsible to Him, not only for their management of their own souls in matters of private conduct, but for their use of the power which He had connected with their office, a power which put them into relations with the people around them which may best be described by the word pastoral. They had now misused this power, put into their hands by God, in direct hostility to the work of God, and in this respect their sin had a peculiar darkness and mischievousness of its own.

Our Lord therefore proceeded at once, without any break, as it seems, in His discourse, to speak of this position of theirs and of the use which they had made of it against Himself, and to the great scandal and disadvantage of the people over whom they were in a certain sense set. He did this in a way less

reproachful to them than He might have used, first by speaking generally, and parabolically, and then also by making His discourse a description of His own pastoral office, at the same time that it is a reproof of their neglect of theirs. The discharge of this part of His Mission was a thought which was very dear to His Sacred Heart, as we have already seen, in the manner in which He dwells upon it in His discourse about scandalizing little ones. It was a part of this love of our Lord for the pastoral office which was committed to Him, that He should yearn with inexpressible desire for all those who were in any way to be made partakers of it with Him, and to have a share at once in its responsibilities and in its dangers and rewards. These men to whom He was now speaking had their part and share in the office, for the image of the shepherd is used of them in the Prophets, and there is much there said about the account which such men have to give if they neglect it. This thought sheds a light of its own on the dealings of our Lord with these false shepherds of the flock, who were doing so much to ruin His work among the sheep, for whom He was to lay down His life. He had been ready to take them to His Heart if they had corresponded to His grace, and now they had set themselves in the most violent opposition to Him. He begins by solemnly reminding them of the misery of being shepherds and yet not working in the right way for the sheep. They had made themselves, in fact, enemies instead of friends. They had exercised their pastoral authority to the destruction of the flock, instead of its edification, by their conduct towards our Lord, which had now issued in the excommunication of the man who had been healed. It was fitting that

some notice of this act of hostility should be taken by our Lord.

'Amen, amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber.' He was Himself, as He explains presently, the door to the fold. But He goes on first to give a picture of the shepherd who enters by the door. 'But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when he leadeth out his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice, but a stranger they follow not, but flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.' We are told by some commentators that it is probable that on this occasion also, as on so many others, our Lord had before His eyes something which suggested the picture which is drawn by Him in these beautiful words about the shepherd. It is true that these words must have been said either in the Temple or in some place in Jerusalem. But there may have been folds for flocks in the immediate neighbourhood of the pool of Siloe, near which was the sheepgate, as it was called, and the description itself rather suggests a home for more flocks than one, such as might be found, as elsewhere in the Holy Land, so especially close to the city, to which the shepherds might bring their flocks for the purpose of greater security from the neighbouring mountains.

Even at the present day, travellers in those countries still tell us of the folds surrounded by walls, with a door which is guarded by a special porter, into which the sheep of different shepherds

are collected. When the shepherd wishes to take his own flock to pasture, he is admitted by the porter. He calls his own sheep, who know his voice, he leads them out, and they follow him as he calls them on from time to time. Thus there is no feature in this description which might not have been present to our Lord and those to whom He was speaking at the moment. Both in this description, and in the explanation of it which follows, our Lord dwells mainly on the points which characterize the shepherd whose the sheep are. But He mixes up also points which distinguish the unlawful aggressor on the fold, or the shepherd who is not truly such. Thus the picture which is here drawn puts before them the true shepherd first, and in the second place the circumstances which belong to the false teacher or pastor. He has evidently in His mind the charge which they have made against Himself by their excommunication of the poor man whom He had healed. The false shepherd is he who does not enter by the door, but climbs over the wall some other way, because he knows that the porter will not admit him. He comes in again incidentally in the passage where it is said that the sheep do not know the voice of strangers, and therefore will not follow him. These are the points in the parable in which the contrast is drawn out between the true shepherd and the thief and robber.

'This proverb spoke Jesus unto them. But they understood not what He spoke to them.' The thoughts of our Lord were too sublime for their perception. They had never realized their own position as shepherds of souls. They had no idea at all of the tenderness and self-sacrificing love of the Good Shepherd. They had flung at Him the

reckless charge which their condemnation of the subject of the miracle implied, little thinking of all the gravity of the accusation, and all the mischief to souls which they imputed to Him, and as little of the true and great weight of their own responsibility. Our Lord therefore went on at once to explain more fully what His parable implied. St. John seems generally to use the Greek word, which is most correctly translated 'proverb,' in the sense in which the other Evangelists use the word which answers to 'parable.'

'Jesus therefore said to them again, Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All others as many as have come, are thieves and robbers, and the sheep heard them not. I am the door. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in and go out and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.' Thus, in the first place, He answers peremptorily and finally the implied charge that He was not a true Shepherd. He is not only a true Shepherd, but He is the door by whom all true shepherds must enter. Their office is but a participation of His, and their power and commission must be derived from Him. There had been persons heard of before who had claimed falsely the prophetic or the pastoral office, and the issue had shown that they were impostors, thieves, and robbers. For the sheep had not heard them, for they had not spoken in the Name of God, nor had the grace of God worked in their hearers to make them accept their teaching. They had not entered by the door, for they had not had admission to the office of shepherd through our Lord in any way. Thus the charge made against

our Lord by these Pharisees is retorted against them. Not only is our Lord a true Shepherd, but He is the only true Shepherd, in the sense that He is the door by Whom all others who are in any way to have a share in the pastoral office must enter in. Those therefore who claimed to be shepherds, and to have the right to denounce Him as an impostor, were by that very fact of their opposition to Him proved out of their own mouths to be impostors themselves, or, if not in the beginning impostors, to have fallen away from their duties as shepherds as far as they had ever been such legitimately, and to be worthy of a place among the thieves and robbers who had preceded them.

'I am the door. By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall go out and shall find pastures.' The language is such as to suit either the shepherd or the sheep. For both the sheep and the shepherds enter in and go out by the door. But it is sufficient to restrain the application to the shepherd himself. To enter in by the door, which is our Lord, is, in the case of the shepherd of souls, both to derive his commission legitimately from Him in the Church and also to follow His example and method of acting and dealing with the flock, and strictly to adhere to the doctrine of salvation as He has left it behind Him. Such a pastor 'goes in and goes out,' which is the common way of describing the whole course of ordinary life, in the pursuit, therefore, of the avocation to which he is called, and shall find pastures for his own soul and for the souls of those whom he may have to feed.

It is easy to see how much is contained in these few words in which our Lord sums up the blessings which attend the true pastor, and the abundant helps

which are provided him for the discharge of his office. Freedom, safety, protection, security in the exercise of a most fruitful and energetic activity, continued under a great variety of circumstances and conditions, all these are implied in the picture of the shepherd going in and going out, as he wills, while his 'finding pastures' seems to embrace the whole range of the means of grace and spiritual refection and enjoyment, which are supplied by the sacraments, prayer, the action of the Holy Ghost on the soul, the strength and light and growth which result from the abundant resources and provisions of the Kingdom of God. The life of the shepherd is thus represented to us as one of great and manifold vigour and interest, as unfolding itself in the practice of a thousand holy virtues and spiritual achievements. The life of the sheep under such guidance and care must correspond to that of the shepherd himself in all this beautiful and rich and secure productiveness, and indeed, as has been said, the language used by our Lord is not limited either to the pastor or to the sheep. On the other hand, there is the part played by the thief, the evil and false pastor, who comes in not by the door, but some other way, not often, but when it suits his fancy or lust. He cometh not but for to steal, and kill and destroy, for his own interests or wants are his only law in his dealings with the flock.

In contrast to this is our Lord's account of Himself. 'I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.' The spiritual life of the soul was not first given by our Lord, when He came among men in the Incarnation, because His grace and the merit of His Sacrifice had been working in the world ever since the begin-

ning of its history. All spiritual life indeed is His gift, all light and all grace are from Him. But His own appearance in the world was to bring about an abundant increase of all life, as it had been before, and this abundance was to continue to increase as the mysteries of His Incarnation were worked out more completely, and especially after the Passion, and Resurrection, and Ascension, and the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the Church. There was remission of sins, which answers to the giving of life to the dead soul, before. But now it became more full and the means of obtaining it more easy of access. There was spiritual knowledge before. But now it was clearer, deeper, larger, more penetrating, reaching further into the mysteries of the Divine Nature and counsels, the position and the prospects of man, the dignity to which he was raised, and the future which was being prepared for him. It was before possible for man to become holy, in imitation of God, as He had said even to the Israelites, 'Be ye holy as I am holy.' But now sanctification, as far as it is attainable by men, became more perfect, more interior, more intense in its purity, more complete and ripe and heroic in its sublimity. Grace was more abundant, more permanent, and more penetrating in its effects. The liberty of children and heirs and sons of God supplanted the condition of servile and laborious obedience which had been possible of old, and men could feel towards God and one another with more perfect confidence and peace and tranquillity and security. The sanctity which had before been the privilege of a few of the servants of God, became the possession of countless thousands in every generation of the Church. All this may be contained in the words

about the more abundant life which our Lord has come to bestow.

But our Lord has something further to say about Himself in the character of the Good Shepherd, something of which He had not before spoken in this connection, even when He was describing the shepherd leaving his ninety-nine sheep safe in the fold, and going in search of the one sheep who had strayed. He had spoken of it in another connection when He had forewarned the Apostles of His coming Passion. He had spoken to them of the death which He was to suffer, but not of the purpose for the sake of which He was to suffer. Now in the presence of His enemies who were to bring about His death, He mentions the reason for which He was to undergo it, the salvation of the sheep of His fold. 'I am the Good—that is the excellent, the perfect, the faultless—Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.' In those countries, as we see in the history of David, the shepherds might have to expose their own lives for the saving of the sheep. Thus the idea is not far-fetched or foreign to the subject, and no doubt it was one on which the Heart of our Lord delighted to dwell. And what could more fitly suggest it than the occasion on which this parable was spoken, when our Lord had before Him some of the very men who were to be the human instruments of His death, for the salvation of the world? Their malice had already shown itself in many ways. He had already declared to them that He knew they wished to kill Him, and now they had added to their former measures of hostility and persecution this new instance of the excommunication of a man on whom He had wrought a miracle, which of itself was enough to convert them.

These words were a secret warning to them that He would not prevent, by any exertion of Divine power, the final accomplishment of the action which they meditated, and which they coloured to themselves with the pretext of zeal for the honour of God and the keeping of the Law. 'But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep, and the hireling flieth because he is a hireling, and hath no care for the sheep.' These words may be understood simply as drawing the contrast between our Lord as the Good Shepherd, and an impostor such as the Pharisees were endeavouring to make Him out to be. Or they may convey a tacit comparison between Himself and the Pharisees themselves, who certainly had no true care or love for the sheep committed, in a certain measure, to their charge, who would not exert themselves to help them in the smallest things, or to bear the burthens which they laid upon them, as our Lord afterwards said of them. Much less, therefore, would they have risked their lives for the sheep. There is this twofold reference running all through this passage—the defence of our Lord Himself, by showing how differently He was disposed towards the sheep from any one who was an impostor, and also the contrast between Himself and the enemies who were attacking Him and denying His title to be considered a lawful shepherd of the sheep of God. But He seems to dwell far more lovingly on the sacrifice He is Himself to make and on the love which He is to display for His sheep, than on the other side of the picture.

He goes on in the following verses to draw out this truth concerning Himself still more fully. 'I am the

Good Shepherd and I know Mine and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.' Here it may be said that our Lord gives four proofs that what He says about the Good Shepherd is true, four characteristics which are found in Himself, and which mark Him out as the Good Shepherd. In the first place He knows His sheep, and in the second place His sheep know Him. He compares this mutual knowledge of Himself and His sheep to the knowledge whereby His Father knows Him and He knows His Father. The third mark of the Good Shepherd is that He lays down His life for His sheep. And the fourth mark is that He has other sheep which are not of this fold, and that He is to show His care and love for these distant or wandering sheep by bringing them home, and making of them with the others one fold under one shepherd.

Our Lord has already said, in His description of the relations between the sheep and the shepherd in the opening parable from which all this passage depends, that the shepherd knows his sheep and calls them by name, and they know his voice. The present passage, therefore, is an expansion of the former, only that here the characteristic of the shepherd is applied to our Lord. He knows His sheep with a knowledge far surpassing that which any ordinary shepherd can possess of the sheep of his flock, even though it is not impossible for this ordinary knowledge in certain cases to be far more intimate than we might suppose it to be. Shepherds ordinarily know their sheep by some external sign, but it is

probable that great familiarity and loving care of their flock may give them a peculiar and individual knowledge which others would hardly believe to be possible. But in any case our Lord knows His sheep, and especially those who are in an especial manner His own by the love of predilection with which He regards those who are to be nearest to Him in Heaven, with a penetration and intimacy which far surpass any human knowledge.

His knowledge of them is a knowledge most fruitful in its results and effects, because He knows them for the purpose of the most special and tender and intelligent protection and guidance over each individual soul, and for the purpose of bestowing upon them, in the largest possible measure, gifts of grace and light in proportion to their capacity and faithfulness, His bounty being guided by His knowledge as well as prompted by His intense love for them. And His knowledge of them is not limited to this or that time or moment in their history. It includes the most compassionate foreknowledge of all their failings or trials or sufferings, the indulgence He will have to show them, the pardon He will have to bestow upon them, and the final blessing of their perseverance and their crowns and glory with Him in Heaven. And He knows them before they come to Him and while they are yet unborn—there is no time at which they are or have been strangers to the everlasting love of their Creator and the Shepherd of their souls. Such is that knowledge of the sheep on the part of our Lord which corresponds to that first characteristic of the Good Shepherd which He has mentioned.

He goes on to say His sheep know Him. Their knowledge of Him corresponds to the capacities of the intelligent nature which He has given them,

which is made for the possession of God in ways of its own, and to the gifts of grace with which He increases the resources of that nature, and also to their experience and knowledge of Him in His dealings with their souls. This knowledge of Himself on their part is His great delight, for it repays Him, in the manner in which it is possible that creatures can repay their God, for all that He has done for them in the order of nature and in the order of grace. Their knowledge of Him leads them to trust themselves to Him, to believe His truth, to give Him the perpetual homage of their service and honour and reverence and worship, and also that perpetual intercourse with Him in prayer and supplication and contemplation which is most dear to His Sacred Heart. This is what answers, in the relations between our Lord and His own, to that knowledge of the shepherd by the sheep of which He had spoken in the parable at the beginning. He adds to these words a comparison between this knowledge and that wherewith His Father knows Him and He knows His Father. 'As the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father.' It is not that there can be complete resemblance between these knowledges, for on the one side there is the mutual knowledge of two Divine Persons, and the other the knowledge between our Lord, a Divine Person, and that which His sheep have of Him. But there is a resemblance which is not one of equality. The Father knows the Son as God, and communicates to Him by His knowledge all His own substance and essence. He knows Him also as Man, and endows His Sacred Humanity with gifts and blessings, and powers of every kind. As God, the Son knows the Father, His essence and substance and Person, and all that He has Himself

received from Him. He loves Him in return, but does not communicate anything to Him, for the Father receives from no other Divine Person. As Man our Lord knows the Father by intelligence and the fulfilment of His will, by working for His honour and making His Name known and glorious.

Thus our Lord is known by His elect, who receive all gifts from Him, and who in return glorify His Name and imitate His example, and the like. Moreover, the immense knowledge and love that exist between the Father and the Son are the fountain and cause of the knowledge and love with which our Lord regards His faithful, and they regard Him. The Divine and increate love is the fountain of all love human and created. So also the Father desires and wills that our Lord should love men with immense love, as such love exists between the Father and the Son. The Father desires through His Son to adopt men as His sons, to give them a share of that filiation which properly belongs by right to the Son alone, but the imparting of which to men who receive Him is the great object of the Mission of the Son in Human Nature. This love of the Father for men is communicated to and shared by the Sacred Humanity.

The third mark by which our Lord here proves Himself to be the Good Shepherd, is that He lays down His life for the sheep. He seems to have before His mind the passage of Isaias, 'If he shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed.'[1] As has been said, it is not unprecedented, for shepherds, in such countries as that in which our Lord spoke—for Judæa, as distinguished from Galilee, was a pastoral country as compared with an

[1] Isaias liii. 10.

agricultural country—to be called on to expose their lives for the safety of the flock committed to their charge. But in no case of the kind could any shepherd make a sacrifice of his life which could be compared to that of the Good Shepherd for the redemption of the world. For no such death can ever redeem souls, nor can it even be efficacious in securing the deliverance of the flock from temporal dangers. But our Lord's Sacrifice saves from eternal death, the true death of the soul. It is also a complete sacrifice of a life which would not have been liable to death but for our sakes, that it might be laid down for the sheep. Whereas any other life that is given for any other cause, however good and great, and with whatever generosity, is only a life cut short before its time. The sacrifice of such a life for another may benefit ourselves, but the sacrifice of the life of our Lord was altogether beneficial to us and not to Himself.

The fourth mark follows, namely, that our Lord has other sheep who are not of that fold, that is, of the Jewish nation. All men were His sheep originally, for before the time of Abraham there was no separation, no peculiar nation chosen by God as His own. Thus nothing can destroy the right by which the whole race of mankind belongs to our Lord as their Creator and as their promised Redeemer, by the promise made immediately after the Fall to the progenitors of all mankind. The Gentiles and the whole race of man from the beginning of time to the end of the world, are thus the sheep of the Good Shepherd. But in that day they were sheep which lay at a distance from Him, and from the small and cherished fold which contained the children of the chosen people. Our Lord now says that it is

a part of His work as the Good Shepherd to fetch home these outlying sheep, and make them one with the others, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd. 'Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.' He was not to do this in His own person, but in the persons of His Apostles and preachers. But they have all their power and all their grace from Him, it is His voice which men hear, it is His grace which moves the souls of the hearers as well as guides the tongues of the preachers. The fold is His, and it is One because it is His, and is ruled by the one shepherd, the Supreme Pontiff, through whom our Lord governs them on earth, as He has used the voices of the Apostles and other Apostolic men in place of His own, to bring home to the one Fold the wandering sheep.

The words which follow may be considered as explaining an apparent difficulty which might be founded on what He has said, namely, that He was to lay down His Life for the sheep. How was this consistent with the following sentence, in which He had said, that He had other sheep, and He must bring them, and that there should be one fold and one Shepherd? If the shepherd laid down his life, how could he bring home other sheep to the fold? Perhaps our Lord rather took occasion from this difficulty to speak of His Death as voluntary, and as to be followed by His Resurrection. For it was well that these truths, which the Jews could not then understand, as even the Apostles did not understand them, should be frequently spoken of, even though the language would not be yet intelligible. His words would rise up in the minds of the Apostles and their disciples, after they had been fulfilled. And

the fact that He had hinted at so much which He had not explained, might lead them on to loving contemplation of many other truths belonging to this rich outpouring of His love as the Good Shepherd. Such would be all the wonderful arrangements in His Kingdom for the nurturing and guarding His sheep by the sacraments and means of grace, and especially that excess of love of which no other shepherd could be capable, of not only giving His life for His sheep, but of feeding them upon Himself after He had died for them.

He says therefore that there is another and a special cause of the love of the Father for Him, which consists in this, that He lays down His Life, as He has said, for the sheep. He does this therefore out of love for His Father and to please His Father. The direct answer to the difficulty is contained in the further statement, that He lays down His life that He may take it up again. 'No man taketh it away from Me but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down and to take it up again.' For our Lord as God, a Divine Person, united to Himself the Body and Soul of which the Sacred Humanity consists, and He had power to separate them by death when He chose, and He had power to reunite them by resurrection when He chose. When He died, He could have enabled His Sacred Humanity to resist still longer the sufferings of the Passion. Thus He laid down His Life, and brought about the separation of the Soul from the Body, in which death consists, of His own will and power. So when He chose to rise again from the dead, He reunited the Soul and the Body by His own power, neither Soul nor Body having been for a moment separated from His Divine Person. Thus

His Death did not put an end to His power of caring for His sheep, for whom it was endured by Him, nor did it prevent Him from gathering in the sheep of the other fold, as He speaks, and making one fold and one Shepherd. The whole of this work for the sheep is the object of the most tender complacency of the Father, and a special cause why the Father loves Him, because all is done by Him out of love and obedience to the Father, as He goes on to say, 'This commandment have I received of My Father.'

These words of our Lord, which contain the reason for the immense joy and resolution with which, as we have seen, He was always looking forward to His Passion and the fruits which were to be its result, contain also most directly the doctrine of the command laid upon Him to die for the salvation of mankind. The command laid upon Him as Man extended to all that was a part of the work of salvation, such as His preaching, His miracles, and the like, and thus we find Him so constantly alleging the precept and command of His Father as the reason for what He says and does. Thus St. Paul speaks of His whole life as a life of obedience, as well as of all other exemplary virtues, and says that 'He became obedient even unto death, the death of the Cross.'[2] Obedience implies a precept, and the theologians give more than one reason for this precept. They say that it was fit that God should show His immense love for man, by laying this command on His Incarnate Son. It was fit that our Lord should repair, by obedience especially, what had been ruined by the disobedience of Adam, and show also to the very utmost His own virtue of humility by dying for us

[2] Philipp. ii. 8.

because this was specially enjoined upon Him. Thus also He gave us the most perfect and consummate example of this blessed virtue, and made His Death on the Cross, which seemed to be the sentence of justice on a malefactor, the highest act of virtue, because it was the highest act of the fulfilment of the will of God. The well-known passage of St. Paul to the Hebrews,[3] describes our Lord at His first entrance into the world, that is, at the first moment of His conception, when the Divine union was perfected in the womb of His Blessed Mother, as offering Himself especially for the accomplishment of this decree of God. It was then that this command was made known to the Sacred Humanity of our Lord by the infused knowledge with which it was endowed, and that as Man He accepted it with the most perfect conformity and resolution to carry it out to the uttermost. Thus when our Lord's words here are carefully considered, they contain within their meaning the whole doctrine of His Divine Person and of His Sacred Human Nature.

Of course the Jews, to whom He was speaking, did not understand Him. 'A dissension therefore rose again among the Jews for these words.' They were designing to bring about His Death, and here He was talking of laying down His life for His sheep, and of taking it up again at will. We see in the few words in which St. John relates the incident, the traces of the obstinacy and obduracy which had for some time marked their treatment of Him. They could not explain His miracles, and yet they could not deny them. So they had to take refuge in their former calumny, of which we shall soon hear again, of His having collusion with the

[3] Hebrews x. 5—7.

devil. 'And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear you Him?' The shortest way out of their difficulty was to set him down as unworthy of all attention, and to bring Him to death. 'Others said, these are not the words of one that hath a devil.' The calm majesty and heavenly sweetness of His words were in themselves utterly inconsistent with the theory of diabolical agency. And besides, the power shown in the miracle surpassed that which was allowed to the devils. 'Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?'

Here the Evangelist leaves them, for His next verses belong to a period of the year considerably subsequent to that of the feast of Tabernacles. We shall have much to relate of what passed in the interval. But St. John has now completed his plan of giving us a general summary of the chief incidents of this most remarkable visit of our Lord to the Holy City for the feast of Tabernacles. The historical value of these chapters of the four Gospels is almost incalculable. They not only fill up a gap in the story, as is the case with almost the whole of this Gospel, but they furnish a key which enables us to understand more clearly the exact position of our Lord at this time with relation to the authorities, to explain the history which immediately follows, and also, as has been hinted, the state of mind in which various classes of the people must have been at the time of which we are now to speak.

It is impossible to suppose that the incidents of the few days of which St. John has here supplied the history can have had but a slight influence on the public mind in general. Our Lord's name was already in the mouths of the people all over the Holy Land. The persons assembled at any of the

great feasts must always have included a large number of strangers, that is, of Jews from different parts of the world. Thus these incidents, which passed chiefly in the Temple, the centre of attraction to the Jews both of Palestine and from other parts, must have taken place under the eyes of thousands, and the occasion on which they were assembled in the Holy City would make the discussion of religious questions a favourite occupation. If our Lord's name had been well known before, He must have become still more generally a subject of interest after this feast.

We have already spoken enough of the attitude of the Chief Priests, who are usually spoken of as the Pharisees and Scribes in the Gospels. Everything that had happened had hardened them more and more against our Lord. We know that the High Priest himself was now no other than Caiphas, a man evidently of bold, ambitious, and unscrupulous character, a man who in other days might have been known as an adroit politician, a man of keen insight in public affairs, and full of ready expedients in carrying out his own views. The behaviour of Caiphas, a little later than this, when after the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus the enemies of our Lord met in council and determined to bring about His death, seems to show that either his office or his character, or perhaps both together, made him so influential as to be able to carry with him the greater number of the Chief Priests, even when what he proposed was in itself wicked and atrocious. But it is the witness of history that there are usually, in such a collection of men in power, many who are unwillingly swept on by the strong and bold policy of their leaders, and who do not in their hearts approve

all the measures in which they yet bear a silent part. It is probable that not all the Chief Priests were as wicked as Caiphas. Probably the division of the men of that rank, into the two sects of Pharisees and Sadducees, made it more difficult for those Pharisees who were inclined to hold back to disengage themselves from the necessity of following their own leaders, while the opposite party might be afraid of incurring the reproach of seeming to favour our Lord.

Moreover, as we can see in the cases of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, He had many secret adherents even among the ruling class. We do not know anything at this time about the attitude of Gamaliel, who afterwards rendered an important service to the Church in persuading the Sanhedrin to leave the Apostles to themselves,[4] who was the master of St. Paul and St. Stephen and a number of others, and who ultimately became a Christian and a saint. He may have been among those of whom our Lord might have said, as He did to the lawyer who questioned Him about the great commandment, that they were not far from the Kingdom of God. At least we can hardly think that such men shared the violent counsels and bitter obduracy of Caiphas. Joseph of Arimathea is called by the Evangelists a disciple of Jesus, and 'one looking for the Kingdom of God,' though St. John adds that he was a disciple secretly, for fear of the Jews. There were others, perhaps, less advanced, who were ready to believe, but not yet disciples. Such were those of whom St. John speaks when he says that 'many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be

[4] Acts v. 34, 30.

cast out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God.'[5] And to these must probably be added a great many more, who were on the road to faith and conversion, and were even more likely than the others to be for the time intimidated by the tyrannical measures of their rulers. As far as we know, no voice was actually lifted up in our Lord's defence, except that of Nicodemus on the occasion of which we have lately heard.

No words can paint more truly the perplexed state of the popular mind, as distinguished from the rulers, than those which St. John reports in the case of the man who had been born blind, and to whom our Lord had given sight. The miracle wrought upon him by our Lord proved to him that He was a prophet. 'What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes?' 'He said, He is a prophet.' This was the natural and reasonable effect of the miracles on the mind of the people. It may well be that they were powerfully drawn to believe in our Lord by His teaching also, for, as the officers said to the Pharisees, 'Never did man speak like this Man'—whether the words referred to the beauty and sublimity of the doctrine, or to the authority with which it was set forth. There were therefore more arguments than one, on the strength of which the people were ready to listen to our Lord, but it is natural to think that to them the miracles were the most cogent. Then, on the other hand, they were met by the declaration of their ecclesiastical rulers, as expressed in those words found in the same account, 'We know that this Man is a sinner.' The word of the authorities, as has been said more than

[5] St. John xii. 42, 43.

once, weighed much with the people. But it was not enough to explain the miracles. 'If He be a sinner, I know not, one thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.' Nothing could obviate the plain fact of these miraculous cures, all of them most tender works of mercy as well as most marvellous displays of Divine power. The adversaries of our Lord were obliged to find some excuse for not giving in their own adhesion, in the face of evidence so strong, and thus we find them saying to the blind man, 'We know that God spoke to Moses, but as to this Man, we know not from whence He is.'

But the simple honest man at once put his finger on the weak point in their position. They were the teachers of Israel, they sat in the Chair of Moses, the people were bound to listen to them. But it was very strange, in a system that came from God, that, on the one hand, people should be bound to take their word, and that, on the other hand, they should be unable to answer the questions of the people. 'Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth.' They were more logical, though more desperately wicked, in their insinuation, made many months before in Galilee, and, as we shall see, soon to be repeated in Judæa, that He was in league with Satan, and cast out devils through the prince of the devils. There was no room for this insinuation here, and if it had been made it would have been rejected, as we see at the close of the narrative on which we have been dwelling. The ecclesiastical rulers had adopted the same policy of giving no explanation of the wonderful facts before them in the case of

St. John Baptist, as we see by their answer to our Lord when He asks them whether St. John's baptism was from Heaven or of men. An authority which claimed allegiance was bound to see and to speak clearly. The people were ready with their own conclusion, which this man also expresses. 'We know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this Man were of God, He could not do anything.'

It was thus, by the action of the authorities themselves, that the good and simple people who were brought into immediate contact with our Lord in His miracles or in His teaching, were driven to a kind of revolt against the constituted authorities of the holy nation. It was thus that all who, whether before or after the Passion and Resurrection, openly joined Him or the Church after Him, had to expose themselves to the risk of excommunication and persecution in the name of God Who had sent Him. The Providence of God did not allow this strained and unnatural state of things to remain long. For, in the course of a single generation from the Day of Pentecost, Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple, with all its sacred rites and associations, was swept away, the line of High Priests ceased, with all the hierarchy depending on them, the nation itself remaining as a witness to the world of God's judgments, but remaining only as a proverb and by-word and warning. But in the acts of these few days of the feast of Tabernacles, we can already see the germ, not only of the Passion, as brought about by the Chief Priests, but of the persecution of the Church of Jerusalem, of

the savage outbreak which cost St. Stephen his life, and of the perpetual hostility under which the Christians of the Holy Land had so long to suffer. Our present business is with the condition of the people of Judæa, to whom our Lord was now about to preach, as He had before done to the population of Galilee. We learn from what has been said the difficulties with which our Lord had now to cope, difficulties far greater than any which had confronted Him in His Galilæan preaching. We learn also to understand how it was that not to those who were to be Apostles alone it was well that He should set forth in all its fulness the doctrine of the Cross. Those who were to become His disciples had now, indeed, to count the cost.

CHAPTER XVI.

Preparation for Preaching in Judæa.

St. Luke ix. 51—62; *Story of the Gospels*, § 97.

St. John, as we have seen, ends his description of the visit of our Lord to Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles quite abruptly. He does not mention anything that can guide us as to His doings and sayings in the interval between this visit and His next appearance in the Holy City at the time of the feast of the Dedication, some three months later. As, on the other hand, no other Evangelist speaks of either of these visits to Jerusalem, we cannot gather from them any guidance as to this interval. The only question can be, whether our Lord started on the missionary progress throughout Judæa, of which we have the narrative in St. Luke, and which it seems on many grounds impossible to place before His visit to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, without first returning to Galilee, or after such a return. The most probable conjecture as to this question seems to be that which supposes that after the conclusion of the feast of Tabernacles and the disputes with the Jewish priests to which it gave rise, our Lord went back for a short period, probably not more than the few days necessary for the collection of His disciples, and then, sending before Him messengers to prepare His way, and as many as seventy-two disciples in pairs into the several cities and

villages where He meant to preach, returned at once northward by the unusual route through Samaria, which was the shortest and quickest, though not altogether free from possible dangers. The actual sending of the seventy-two did not take place until our Lord entered Judæa, but they must have been collected in Galilee. We are nowhere told whether all the Apostles were in His company during His late visit to Jerusalem, though we can hardly think of them as absent. But it is clear that He meant this visit to be in a manner private, at least unexpected, and that therefore He was not accompanied by any large band of disciples. The mission He was now about to begin required the assistance of a considerable body of followers, or forerunners, and it seems likely that He must have organized it in Galilee before beginning it in Judæa. Perhaps, at this same time, our Blessed Lady may have finally removed from Capharnaum, and begun to reside more permanently somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, probably at Bethany.

We have thus a sufficient reason supplied us for the supposition which is most in keeping with the language of St. Luke. That Evangelist makes the beginning of the preaching in the southern province of the Holy Land a point of great importance, as marking a new departure in the course of the active Life of our Lord. It adds something to the intelligence which we may gain concerning this period, to see that it must have been preceded by the solemn visit of our Lord to the capital of which St. John has told us. It adds considerably to our conceptions of the solemnity and deliberation with which our Lord began this last period of His Preaching, when we connect it with the grand series of incidents of

which St. John has been telling us in the few last chapters. The narrative brings out in a more clear light the conditions under which the Judæan ministry was begun. It was natural that He should begin by knocking at the door of Jerusalem itself, and give her High Priests and learned men a new opportunity of accepting His claims. We have seen what the reception on their part was, with which this gracious appeal of His was met. When this was over, our Lord, far from being cowed, or induced to abandon His design by the bitter opposition with which He had been received in Jerusalem, began the evangelization of the country in the immediate neighbourhood of the city with a vigour and determination which showed, at least to His disciples, how little He feared the worst that His enemies could do against Him. If He retired for a short interval to Galilee, it was only, as has been said, for the purpose of preparation.

'And it came to pass when the days of His assumption were accomplished, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.' The words seem to mean that when the time was approaching for His Passion and Death, which were to lead to His return to Heaven whence He had come, He fixed His course with a certain amount of obvious determination and resolution to go in the direction of the spot where that Passion and Death were to be accomplished. The language implies that the determination to go to Jerusalem was one which involved a plain and evident danger, from which human policy might have shrunk back, and which our Lord, with full cognizance and deliberation, embraced and carried out. No doubt, if the view is correct which has here been taken of the object of the visit to Jerusa-

lem which immediately preceded this preaching in point of time, we have therein a very great explanation of the language of St. Luke, and of the conduct of our Lord which he here relates. It must have been clear not only to the infallible prescience of our Lord Himself, but also to the anxious reflections of those most nearly intimate with His counsels, that the enterprise on which He was now embarking could have but one issue, unless He was prepared to overwhelm by some act of His Divine Omnipotence the hostility of the rulers in the Holy City. He had kept for so long aloof from them, and the experience of the week just passed could only show the prudence of His conduct in this respect. There had been proof enough of the truth of His own words, that the world hated Him, and was prepared to go to any length, even of crime, to rid itself of Him. And yet now that He had so abundantly proved the wisdom of His own estimate of the dispositions of the world in His regard, He was preparing at once to brave its enmity in the most pointed and open way, a way which could not but lead to some dreadful termination of the deadly conflict in which He was about to engage. Thus we cannot be surprised if the preparation for this new enterprise of Apostolical preaching over a large area of country where He had hitherto been comparatively unknown, made an impression on the minds of the disciples, which is reflected in the words of the Evangelist of which we are now speaking.

'And He sent messengers before His face, and going they entered into a city of the Samaritans to prepare for Him.' The words seem to imply that He travelled now with some little band of followers with Him, perhaps a few more besides the Apostles, even

if He had not in immediate companionship with Himself the whole band of the seventy-two whom He was so soon to send forth to preach. The messengers of whom the Evangelist speaks must have been distinct from these seventy-two, and probably from the Apostles, and their object may have been simply to secure Him and His companions some kind of hospitality. The bigotry of the Samaritans would probably be more particularly excited at the time of the ordinary pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which were now over, and therefore it might have been hoped that they would not now make any difficulty about according hospitality to the strangers from Galilee. Indeed, it seems hard to think that our Blessed Lord never passed through the part of the Holy Land which is commonly called Samaria, and in which Carmel and other sites were to be found, dear to the people in general on account of their historical connection with great Prophets or with events in the national annals. Many of the most famous shrines of the older dispensation were to be found in the Samaritan districts. However this may have been, it is certain that on this occasion our Lord, Who had in His mind what would take place as to the advance of the Gospel Kingdom in these parts within a short time of His own Ascension, passed through the country on this expedition to Judæa. But His messengers were not received. This incident stirred the fiery zeal of some of the Apostles. 'And they received Him not, because His face was of one going to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John had seen this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come from Heaven and consume them?' The allusion was to the act of Elias in dealing with the messengers of

the wicked King Ochozias, as related in the opening chapter of the Fourth Book of Kings,[1] in which we are told how the Prophet had called down fire from Heaven on the companies of soldiers sent by the King to arrest him. The offence of the Samaritans was hardly such as to call for so summary a vengeance, but probably there was still in the hearts of the Apostles some national feeling of contempt for the alien race.

In any case, if the crime of the Samaritans had been more heinous than it was, their punishment would have been altogether contrary to the spirit of the Gospel Kingdom, and it is perhaps on this account that our Lord permitted His messengers to make the application. 'And turning He rebuked them, saying, You know not of what a spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save. And they went unto another town.' It is not meant, apparently, that the disciples were led away by an evil spirit, but that they were moved by a spirit which belonged rather to the Old Law than to the Gospel. Our Lord could not mean to imply that the act of Elias had not been holy and good, and in perfect accordance with the will of God at the time. For if that had been so, perhaps the fire would not have descended from Heaven at his bidding. The fire devoured two captains of fifty and their men, but when the third implored the Prophet to spare his life, the Angel of God told the Prophet to go with him to the King without fear. In the case before us, the difference of which our Lord speaks is not between a good spirit and an evi spirit, but between the good spirit of the Gospe Kingdom and the good spirit of the older dispensa-

[1] 4 Kings i.

tion, in which it was frequently the case that the enemies of God were punished visibly and summarily, instead of being called to repentance and conversion. That was the spirit of the Old Testament, not of the New. In the Old Law many offences were to be punished by corporal death, and in general by temporal punishments. In the New Law of grace, men are to be invited to penitence, and pardoned on their repentance. The proper punishment for the Samaritans would have been prayer for their conversion, which might have led them to open their gates gladly instead of shutting them against our Lord and His followers.

'The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save.' Here, as elsewhere, the word used for souls may be translated lives, and in both senses it is true of the Mission of the Son of Man. It is very possible that our Lord arranged this incident at the outset of the new Apostolical work which was now to be begun, for the very purpose of showing His closest followers the true spirit in which such works were to be carried out. The preaching of the Gospel was always to be, as St. Paul speaks, a savour of life to some and of death to others, according to the reception which they give to it. In this sense there were to be great responsibilities incurred by its rejection, and this truth was to be publicly witnessed to in such cases as those in which, according to His precept, the messengers of God were to shake the dust off their feet in departing from some obstinately rebellious place or set of men. But the vengeance, of whatever kind it might be, was to be left to God, and the Apostles were to act on the precept which bade them when persecuted in one city flee unto another, on account of the immense value of their

time and the number of places and persons where their labour might become profitable. In the case before us it was probably not our Lord's intention to linger long in any place of the Samaritans, even if He sought at their hands anything more than simple hospitality, for which as a nation they had a certain reputation. And so we are told, that 'they went unto another town.'

It is probably not without some conscious intention of grouping together incidents which have more connection in the import of the teaching which is conveyed by them than in the order of time, that St. Luke has prefixed this incident of 'the question of the Apostles, how to deal with this Samaritan town, to the three following anecdotes which succeed in order in the text of this Evangelist in this place. We have already spoken of two of these, in the place which they seem to occupy in the story, where they are inserted by St. Matthew. It is indeed probable that incidents of this character were continually happening in the course of our Lord's preaching, occasioned by the enthusiasm or other feelings excited in the minds of men by His teaching and miracles. Scores of persons would probably present themselves to our Lord with desires or offers of joining the ranks of His close followers, and in very different states of heart or degrees of purity of intention. Our Lord must have had some methods which He ordinarily followed in different cases, and these would become connected in the memories of the Apostles with the short proverbial or epigrammatic form of words in which He dismissed His petitioners. St. Luke does not often desert the order of time. But the truth seems to be that these various methods of our Lord might be considered as fitly to be in-

serted in the narrative, wherever one of the cases occurred of the class of applications to which they all belong. St. Matthew seems to have selected a time when our Lord was apparently leaving Capharnaum and its neighbourhood for a course of Apostolical preaching, earlier by several months than the occasion of which St. Luke is here speaking. It does not follow that the first Evangelist meant his readers to think that all that he places at that point of his story occurred at the same time, and the same remark may be made with equal truth of St. Luke here. It is enough if on each of the two occasions some one of the applications was made, and then we may suppose that each Evangelist joined the other cases on to that. Taken together, and in conjunction also with the incident of the Samaritan town, of which St. Luke speaks immediately before, they give us a collection of principles of our Lord's ways of dealing with men who either volunteered themselves for His immediate service or were deliberately called to it by Himself, as well as with those who were ill-disposed towards Him.

'And it came to pass as they walked in the way, that a certain man said to Him, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head. But He said to another, Follow Me. And then he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God. And another said, Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus said to him, No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of

God.' If we refer back to the former occasion on which we have had to insert some of these replies of our Lord, and if we compare them with those here given, we find that the first of the three mentioned by St. Luke is almost identical with the first as it is given earlier, only that in St. Matthew it is 'a certain scribe' who makes the offer to follow our Lord whithersoever He shall go. The answer of our Lord is in that case exactly that which is here given by St. Luke. In the second case there is a slight difference. In the case in St. Matthew it is not said that our Lord began by giving the call, 'Follow Me.' As far as we can judge from the language in St. Matthew, the person spoken of may have come to our Lord as a volunteer, but with the condition that he should first go home and bury his father. This, as has been said elsewhere, may mean either his remaining at home as long as his father lived, or simply the discharge by him of the last solemn rites for his father who had just died. Our Lord's answer in St. Matthew is almost the same as here, though not quite, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead.' The third case as given by St. Luke is not mentioned by St. Matthew. We have now to consider these several cases, as exemplifying the principles on which all such questions were dealt with by our Lord.

In the case of the first man we are not told whether the answer given to him by our Lord stopped him in his apparent zeal to devote himself to His service. He is not said to have gone away sorrowful, like the rich young man to whom our Lord replied by bidding him go and sell all that he had and give it to the poor, and then come and follow Him. In these cases it is not so much the state of mind in the individual who is spoken of that is of the greatest

importance to us. And indeed, in no one of the three cases before us are we told by the Evangelists what was the issue of our Lord's words addressed to them. In this first case it is at least clear that our Lord meant to draw attention to the hardships to which those who volunteered for the Apostolical office would be exposed, if it were only for the purpose of securing their entire dependence on the Providence of the Father to which they were committed. It is our Lord's way to put the difficulties and dangers plainly before men, and let them, as He says, count the cost before they undertake the great work of the ministry. It is for this reason, we may suppose, that He does not dwell on the promises, which He elsewhere puts forward, of God's care and protection over them which, as a matter of history, shield them from the consequences which might otherwise ensue on their utter abandonment of themselves to Him without any earthly provision for ordinary necessaries of life. It has been thought that this man or scribe, if he be the same person spoken of in both the narratives, might have been actuated by some ambition or even some expectation of worldly profit in offering himself to our Lord. But this is not necessary to be supposed. He may simply have required fortifying by the clear prospect of the hardships of the Apostolical life, without having anything insincere in his own thoughts as to himself. Our Lord may have meant to point out that the foundations of this life must be laid deep in detachment from earthly things and commodities, in the spirit of mortification and unworldliness, and in the total abandonment of self to the care of Providence. Such a spirit can never be produced so quickly or so lastingly as by experience of hardship,

poverty, privation, and want of all sorts, and of the wonderful Providences by which such dangers are frequently relieved.

The man who volunteered himself on this occasion may have had no previous training of this kind, and might be profitably warned not to trust his own strength in a way of life to which he was entirely unused. It was at least some preparation for the undertaking that he should be so plainly warned what he was to expect. He was to be homeless, friendless, destitute of the most necessary things for ordinary daily life, such as shelter for the night after his days of toil. Our Lord sweetens the bitter draught, so to say, by speaking of these hardships as endured by Himself. For the volunteer had spoken of following Him whithersoever He went, and in this statement about Himself by our Lord, is contained an appeal to the loyalty and personal devotion of the disciples, who could desire nothing better than really to share the lot of their Master. The words also imply the immense reward which must await those who have really followed their Master in the hardships of the Apostolical life, for having been with Him in His sufferings they have earned the title to be with Him in His glory. There is also implied the promise of the perpetual watchfulness of the Father over them, for He cannot abandon those who simply follow the Son of Man. Thus we have here a first intimation of the promise made a little later than this to those who have given up everything for His sake, the promise of the hundred-fold, with persecutions, and of everlasting life.

The second of the cases before us may be considered as identical in the two Evangelists, although,

as has been said, there are slight differences in the accounts. In the narrative of St. Matthew the call of our Lord, 'Follow Me,' does not precede the pleading of the kind of excuse about the burial of the father. The disciple simply makes his offer, as it seems, and is answered by our Lord in the way mentioned by both Evangelists. The identity of the answer is not conclusive as to the identity of the persons to whom it may have been addressed, and it would be dangerous to admit this as a principle in the arrangement of such difficulties. Nor is the answer of our Lord exactly identical in these two cases. For in the narrative of St. Matthew He says, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead,' and in St. Luke's account the words are, 'Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.' It is not impossible therefore that the cases may have been different. In the one case the man is invited to join our Lord's company, in the other he is sent off on a mission of preaching. But as the two accounts may be reconciled without any violence to either, it is better to take them as possibly the same, especially as the point is the same in both. This point is contained in the words of our Lord, forbidding one who was called to the preaching of the Kingdom of God and to the close following of Himself in that vocation, from attending even to the most natural duties of human piety in preference to that divine vocation. The words of the plea are ambiguous, as has been said, but they will be taken as putting the case most forcibly if they are understood as referring to the simple discharge of the last offices of religion to the deceased father. In the other case in which they might mean a long and uncertain delay, in taking

care of an aged father until it should please God to release him by death, they might imply an objection which would render the obedience to the Divine call impracticable, and so defeat it altogether.

If the words are to be understood, then, in the former sense, we have our Lord here laying down the principle that no duties of this kind are to stand in the way of obedience to a Divine call to perfection, such as is implied in the words, 'Follow thou Me,' or to the apostolical life, such as is contained in the words, 'Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.' And of course it follows as a matter of strict reason that any calls similar in authority to those of which we have spoken, such, for instance, as a call to a person who has been brought up outside the Catholic Church to submit to her authority, or the call that might come to a person who had inculpably contracted marriage with a person already bound to another, to leave the unlawful union, must be obeyed with a similar disregard of feelings naturally lawful, and even, as long as the ignorance remained, holy and good. In all such cases the law is here laid down by our Lord that the rights of God are to be attended to, not only, it may be said, before all others, but as if all others did not exist at all.

The writers on this passage give us many reasons which may have been in the mind of our Lord, with particular reference to the state of mind and heart of the person who made this application, who is said by an old tradition to have been no other than the Apostle St. Philip. There seem to be no very strong grounds for this tradition, but, on the other hand, the hypothesis that it was invented with no grounds at all to suggest it is one not altogether free from considerable difficulty. If it could have been St. Philip, we

must suppose him to have received the news of his father's death while in attendance on our Lord as an Apostle, and to have asked whether he might go home for the purpose of burying him. The reasons which may have been in the mind of our Lord are very cogent in themselves. If, for instance, He saw a danger to the constancy of the disciple in the intercourse which he must have with his family, who are supposed, from the way in which they are spoken of, to have been unbelievers in our Lord, or if there were likely to arise disputes about the inheritance of the father's goods, or if there were any other dangers, open to the world, or only open to the eye of our Lord Who knew the heart, then the refusal of permission would have another and further foundation from that which we have assigned.

But in any case, we must find the main principle on which such cases are to be settled in the words of our Lord, which mention no one of the reasons suggested by the commentators, but simply assert the prerogative of the Divine call over even the tenderest and best of human affections and ties and the duties which spring from them. In the former case our Lord had laid down the rule that the person called to the apostolical life must be entirely free and destitute of the ordinary resources of home and the like. In this case He lays down the further principle that he must be as one who has not only no home, but also no family. When we consider the multitudinous calls that were to present themselves under the guise of these natural obligations, and the immense swarms of souls that would be beset by them in their endeavours to carry out divine vocations of various kinds, we can see reason for intense gratitude to our Lord for having settled the principle

once for all with the most absolute plainness, and for putting His solution of the matter on the highest grounds without admitting of any exception. If the case had been considered in our Lord's answer as of one individual soul only, and as affected by this or that special circumstance, the difficulties which would beset souls would have been increased tenfold. As it is, our Lord has here left us a principle which covers the most extreme claims of family affection and duty in the natural order. If in any particular case there were reasons for the kind of delay of which there is here question, it must be supposed that our Lord would either not give the call, or would Providentially interpose difficulties which would make His will clear. When it is clearly given, then the dead must be left to bury the dead. The words seem to mean that the persons of whom He was speaking were dead in faith, and therefore could not be brought to receive the visit or the presence of the messenger of God with any profit to themselves, or, consequently, to him. The time spent among them would be unprofitable, and they would be able to discharge perfectly the outward rites of sepulture for the deceased father.

There is also another lesson which we may profitably gather from this answer of our Lord, if we suppose that the second interpretation of the plea alleged be true. In that case, it is to be understood that the delay asked for was indefinite in its duration, as its termination would depend on the length of the life of an old man in any particular case. The lesson which is conveyed, under this supposition, is that delay is always dangerous when a divine vocation has once come home to the soul in clearness and force, a call which the conscience recognizes as a

call from God to itself. There is danger in anything that has any appearance of trifling with His voice. His call is not one that can be put aside at one time and listened to at another. It is a call to a particular work, at a particular time. He chooses the time to call on us, as well as the work to which He calls us, and as the call comes from a particular act of love on His part, so also does the grace, which gives us the power to close with the invitation, come from the same love. But that He calls us now, and will strengthen us if we answer His call, is no security that He will call us by-and-bye at a time of our own, and give us then the grace which we put aside now. His tender love does, indeed, wait long for souls. But He is not bound to wait, and He passes on, in many cases, to give to others the gift which we have been so rude and foolish as to decline. In His parable of the Wedding Supper, the people, not one of whom is to taste of it, are those who were the first to be invited, and who have excused themselves. The highways and hedges are to be scoured for guests, but for those who were first called there is to be no room found.

The third of these cases, which is given only by St. Luke, seems at first sight to be only a repetition of the last. If it were simply this, still it might be worth while for the Evangelist to insert it for the sake of the pithy saying of our Lord, couched in a proverbial form, in which the answer was made. But the principle expressed in the proverb about the man who has put his hand to the plough and looks back, and is therefore unworthy of the Kingdom of God, is quite different from that which is expressed in the words, 'let the dead bury their dead.' And it does not seem to be the case that this

anecdote refers to quite the same subject as the former. The Greek words, which are translated 'them of my house,' is equally well rendered by 'the things that are in my house.' And indeed this is the reading of the Vulgate, and of the Latin texts in general. The natural sense of the verb which is translated 'bid farewell to those in my house,' would be to put things in order so as to be rid of them, or at least to put them in complete and final order. But the Hellenistic use of the word in the middle voice is that which is expressed in the words of our version, 'bid farewell.' This is the nearly uniform usage of the word in the New Testament. But still this is the word used a little later on in this Gospel, when our Lord says that 'every one of you that doth not *renounce* all that he possesseth, cannot be My disciple.'[2] The proposal of the disciple, therefore, may have included the arrangement of affairs and the renunciation of property and the like, as well as the simple taking leave of his relations. But this is something different from the discharge of the funeral duties to a deceased father. And it may have involved the possible entering into many matters of business and the arrangement of many material interests, as well as the parting from those dear to the disciple.

But in any case this also is cut short by our Lord. He does not speak here of the dangers which He may have foreseen peculiar to the case of the disciple who made the request. He here again asserts a great principle of gospel action—that a soul once devoted to the interests of God and the duties of a Divine vocation, must not let anything come in as a distraction from the work, or give it over for any human interest or apparent duty whatever. The

[2] St. Luke xiv. 35.

prohibition touches the simple 'looking back' with the affections and possible repinings which may arise, and it implies that the way to be safe against the repinings and consequent dangers is not to look back at all. Moreover, our Lord seems to have had in His mind the case of the famous looking back in the Old Testament history—the occasion when the wife of Lot was turned into a pillar of salt. The Greek words here used by St. Luke are the same with those used in the Book of Genesis,[3] in the narrative of her story. And our Lord repeats the same words later on in His injunctions about the behaviour of the disciples in the dreadful time of the last days. 'He that is on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away, and in like manner, he that is in the field let him not return back.' And then He adds, 'Remember Lot's wife.' What we are, therefore, especially taught in the words of our Lord with regard to this third case is that there is to be no looking back, no diversion of attention and devotion from the one work which has been taken up for God, which requires all our mind and heart and is sufficient for them. The ploughman cannot afford to turn his eyes from the line along which he is guiding the plough, as the man at the wheel of the ship must not take his eyes off the compass. He that in the work of God fails in this way is not worthy of it, for he has not understood the conditions under which it is to be undertaken and carried on.

This principle is to be found again insisted on in the injunction given to the Apostles to salute no man by the way, when they are engaged in their work of evangelizing the world. Not that our Lord would

[3] Genesis xix. 26.

have us discourteous or rude, or negligent of the claims of friendship and the like, but that the preaching of the Gospel is a solemn embassy from God to man, and must be carried on with a seriousness and reverence which forbid all distraction or interruption, much in the same way as the solemn services of the Church, the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, or some great Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, must not be interrupted for the sake of courtesy to friends. Thus it was a fault in the prophet who was sent from Juda to denounce the false worship set up by Jeroboam, as mentioned in the Third Book of Kings,[4] to turn aside and accept the hospitality which was pressed upon him, although in that case he had received a special injunction not to eat or drink in the place to which he was sent. It is on this principle that we find saints acting in leaving aside visits to their homes when they are sent on missions for the salvation of souls, as St. Francis Xavier would not turn aside to see his aged mother before starting for the Indies. Thus we have in this third instance recorded by St. Luke a new principle of Evangelical conduct not contained in the former.

Indeed it may be remarked that the whole of this part of the third Gospel, in which, as has been said, the visit of our Lord to the feast of Tabernacles is altogether omitted, reflects the care which our Lord was now devoting to the formation of the Apostles for the work of the ministry of souls. St. Luke has been very brief in this part of his work, for he seems to be desirous of devoting the greater part of the central portion of his Gospel to the ministry in Judæa, which we are presently to enter on. But he has left nothing untouched which has reference to

[4] 3 Kings xiii.

this formation of Christian ministers. Just before this passage he has mentioned the instructive incidents of the dispute among the disciples, and the manner in which our Lord dealt with it, as also the prohibition which they had given to the man who was casting out devils in the name of our Lord, without belonging to their own company. Immediately after this he has given us the passage on which we have commented in the present chapter, which contains, as we have seen, the teaching of our Lord called forth by the proposal to call fire down from Heaven on the inhospitable Samaritan town, as well as the collection of instances in which He answered various applicants, whether for admission to the Apostolical body, or for exemptions and permissions connected with its work. And we are to pass on immediately to the account given by St. Luke, and by him alone, of the mission of the seventy-two disciples, and the charge given to them by our Lord.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mission of the Seventy-two.

St. Luke x. 1—16 ; *Story of the Gospels*, §§ 98, 99.

It would naturally be in Galilee that the greater number of the disciples of our Lord would be found, especially of those among them who were to some extent familiar with His Person and teaching, so as to be fitter than others for employment in any mission or office of trust. As our Lord had determined to mark the missionary enterprise, which He was now about to undertake in Judæa and Peræa, by the selection of a body of evangelists much more numerous than that of the Apostles themselves, who were probably not sent away at this time from their close companionship with Himself, it would be enough to account for His return to Galilee after the feast of Tabernacles, that the members of this new body were to be selected and prepared for their errand. The whole of this period, except that part of it which is covered by the visits to Jerusalem and the immediate neighbourhood, which are related by St. John, is reserved in the New Testament for St. Luke, whom we shall now begin to follow for a considerable space of time. This portion of the third Gospel bears marks of having been collected by the author, perhaps at the time when St. Paul was in his long imprisonment at Cæsarea, from sources which had been left unused

by the two former Evangelists. It may represent the recollections of many of the Christians still living in those parts of the Holy Land at that time, although when this is said, it must not be supposed that it is meant that the whole of this part, as of all the rest of this Gospel, was not derived from a still higher origin in the revelations concerning our Lord's life made to St. Paul, or in the recollections of the other Apostles and documents founded thereon, in communications from our Blessed Lady, and in the perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghost. It is remarkable that it is in this part of the Gospel that we find our Lord often spoken of as 'The Lord,' instead of by the use of the Holy Name of Jesus, which was probably the familiar usage with the Apostles and companions of our Lord, and which as time went on, may have been gradually changed for the less familiar appellation. We find in this part of St. Luke certain anecdotes in which the name of Jesus is still used, and it is natural to conjecture that these passages come to us more directly from persons who were themselves familiar with His Sacred Person.

'And after these things the Lord appointed also other seventy-two, and He sent them two and two before His face into every city or place whither He Himself was come.' It is well known that the number is not exactly the same in all the manuscripts and versions, but the authority of the Vulgate is enough for us here, and the reading seventy-two is moreover supported by the precedent of the princes, who, as Josephus tells us, were seventy-two in number,[1] appointed by Moses to assist him in the task of administering justice. Whether these seventy-two disciples

[1] See Exodus xviii. 21.

were meant by our Lord to be a permanent body in the Church, we are not told, but many Fathers consider them as representing the priests of the second order, in distinction from the bishops as represented by the Apostles. Their present office was evidently only temporary. There was a great need to be supplied by their ministry, for the time which our Lord was to devote to this preaching in Judæa and Peræa was comparatively short, and it was very important that the people in every place to which He was to pass should be prepared for His coming. This was the immediate office of these seventy-two disciples, who are not spoken of again, after this mission, anywhere in the New Testament.

St. Luke gives the charge delivered to them before sending them out, which is a repetition of that which Our Lord had before given, on a similar occasion, to the Twelve Apostles, except that a great part of that charge is omitted, apparently for the simple reason that this was merely a temporary mission. Those parts of the former charge which could refer to such a mission are therefore inserted, while the greater and more general precepts, which were to govern the whole work of Apostolical preaching to the end of time, are not here repeated. Thus we have here the command to pray for the sending forth labourers into the abundant harvest, the declaration that they are sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, the precept of the practice of poverty and dependence on Providence, the instructions how to enter the house, with the salutation of peace, and not to pass from house to house, to eat what is set before them, to heal the sick and announce the advent of the Kingdom of God, and to cast off the dust from their feet in the places in which they are not received.

The charge ends with the declaration that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for the city which has rejected them. Then follows a repetition of the denunciation of woes on Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum, with the consoling words, 'He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.'

'And He said to them, The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest. Go, behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way.' In the former charge, which is preserved for us by St. Matthew, our Lord seems to have explained this injunction about making no provision for the journey, by the addition of the words (which are added in another place in this discourse), 'for the workman is worthy of his meat.' The proverb seems to mean that persons who give their time and labour to such undertakings as that which was now committed to the messengers of our Lord, have a right to expect sustenance, and a full supply of all that they needed in raiment and the like, from the undertaking itself. The words which are here added, 'Salute no man by the way,' seem to refer, in like manner, to the dignity of the work, which was so great and divine that they were not to turn aside for the sake of ordinary civilities and courtesies, just as priests carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick do not turn aside to speak to any friend they may meet. 'Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there your peace shall rest upon him, but if not it shall

return to you.' The son of peace is the man who is at peace with God and his neighbour and himself, whose heart and mind are disposed to receive the truth brought by the messengers of our Lord without resistance or cavil or contention. In the former charge He had said that if the house was worthy their peace should rest there. Here He says rather more. For it seems that the promise here made implies that if there be but one well-disposed and peaceful soul in the house, the blessing shall rest on him, even though the whole family might not be well-conditioned. And even if there be no one there worthy of the blessing, then the blessing shall return on themselves, in an increase of peace and grace. 'And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.' That is, as it seems, they are not to scruple even if their stay imposes on their entertainers the burthen of their food for the time during which their mission lasts, for this is not so much a simple alms as a remuneration to them for the labour which they spend on the spiritual feeding of the souls to whom they preach. At the end of the former charge, in St. Matthew, we find this injunction explained by the declaration that any one who receives a prophet, or a preacher of the Gospel, as such, in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet, as if he had himself had a share in proclaiming the Word of God. And in the place in that charge in which this precept of remaining in the same house is given, we have the reason assigned of which mention was made lately, namely, that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.' All through our Lord insists on the dignity of the mission on which they are sent.

He teaches us also that it is better to remain always in the same family than to change about, on the plea that there may be a more even distribution of the charge of their sustenance. 'Remove not from house to house.' Many good reasons may be assigned for this precept, as the avoidance of occasions of jealousy or rivalry, or the trouble to which they might be put by solicitations and invitations, and the loss of time that might be involved in frequent changes. 'And into what city soever you enter and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.' This precept seems to forbid anything like peculiarity in food, as if the Seventy-two had refused the ordinary fare as being too delicate for them on the one hand, or not good enough on the other. To avoid all such questions the rule is given to eat what is set before them, showing complete indifference, and adopting local customs and habits in such respects, a rule which to missionaries in some parts of the world is the occasion of great acts of virtue and mortification. 'And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh to you.' This injunction is the same with that which occurs at the beginning of the charge given to the Twelve Apostles when they were sent out, as St. Matthew tells us. But here the other words 'raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, freely have you received, freely give,' are not added. It is certain that the Seventy-two had the power of casting out devils, for their exercise of that power is noticed by St. Luke immediately after this, as having been a matter of rejoicing to them, and mentioned as such by them, when they returned to our Lord. Perhaps they had not all the powers which were entrusted to the

Apostles, as their mission was immediately to be followed by the presence of our Lord Himself. This must be left in uncertainty. In any case it is remarkable how careful our Lord is for the sick, as He places their healing in the first place in St. Matthew, where those other commissions were added, and mentions it also here where they are left out.

The command to shake the dust off the feet in the case of cities which do not receive the messengers of God, is more particular, and in stronger language, in this than in the former charge. There it is simply, 'Shake off even the dust from your feet for a testimony against them,' an action which might be performed in silence, and without drawing the attention of the people themselves to it. Here they are to go forth into the streets, so as to be seen by all, and to speak to the people. 'Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you. Yet know this, that the Kingdom of God is at hand' —as if the last words were to be a warning, implying that there was yet a little time left for them in which they might repent. 'I say to you it shall be more tolerable at that day for Sodom, than for that city,' the reason for the greater chastisement lying in the greatness of the opportunities vouchsafed by God to those to whom the offer of pardon was made by special messengers sent by Him, with all the graces and evidences of the Gospel Kingdom, whereas Sodom was left to the reproaches of conscience and the general witness of the natural law, together with whatever holy traditions may have come down to its inhabitants in that generation.

As our Lord was now, so to say, taking leave of Galilee, the scene of so many of His labours, mercies, and miracles, it is very natural to find that the in-

junction given to the Seventy-two concerning the cities which might reject them, should turn His loving thoughts to the memory of the wonders which He had wrought in so many places in vain. 'Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Judgment than for you.' The Sacred Heart, which rejoices so tenderly over one sinner doing penance, over one triumph of grace in the reclaiming of a wandering population, could not but feel with equal tenderness the rejection of Its graces, which was more than a disappointment and defeat, because the obstinacy of those who reject special graces when offered them makes their own case worse than it was before. Thus the issue of our Lord's efforts in these cases had been to make these cities still more the objects of the vengeance of God. And so it is in all such cases—there is in all something of that terrible perversity and ingratitude which, when found in extreme malignity in the case of Judas, made our Lord say that it would have been better for that man if he had not been born. There are, therefore, many degrees of chastisement for those who are not found in the grace of God at the last. And the worst of all degrees are those which are meted out to the persons who have had the best opportunities, the highest vocations, the most abundant means of grace. Christians and Catholics think and speak with compassion of those outside the Church, or even without the knowledge of the revelation of our Lord. And yet for many a soul, many a city, many a nation, among such, there will be a

less terrible judgment to be borne at last than for those who have had all the privileges of the Gospel Kingdom.

Our Lord speaks again, as on the former occasion when words like these rose to His sacred lips, of the case of His own city, Capharnaum. 'And thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to Hell.' These denunciations of our Lord fall, of course, in the first instance, upon the cities named, considered as moral entities, that is, on the inhabitants and on their posterity, in the hardening of the latter, and in the withdrawal from both of the spiritual opportunities which, if they had been closed with, would have secured them untold blessings in this world and in the next. But the implied malediction falls also, in such cases, on the actual spots, which are so frequently ruined by war or pestilence, or by some other visitation of God. Thus for a long series of centuries the shores of the Lake of Galilee have been desolate, or at least sparsely inhabited, the rich country around, which in the time of our Lord was a garden of fertility, so full of populous towns that it is difficult to accept at once the assertions of Josephus regarding it, is a comparative waste, without cultivators to till it. Even the lake, in which the Apostles so often fished, the lake connected with so many of our Lord's most striking and prophetic miracles, is no longer a source of wealth or subsistence to those who dwell near it. A writer of our own day tells us of the one ricketty boat which was to be found on its waters. The blight of desolation, which falls on almost every land in which the Turks live as conquerors, is to be found even over the smiling and teeming Galilee, which was so long blessed by the presence of our Lord and

His Mother. For it seems to be the ordinance of Providence that there should be this external witness to the spiritual and moral misery which was brought upon the inhabitants of these favoured places by their own indifference to and neglect of the unparalleled opportunities which were theirs, though but for a comparatively short space of time. So it was to be, in a still more conspicuous measure, with Jerusalem itself, which, notwithstanding the veneration which it cannot but attract from Christians all over the world on account of the Holy Places of the Passion and Resurrection, is still a city of misery, 'trodden under foot of the Gentiles,' as our Lord predicted. Our Lord does not yet add the name of the Holy City to those of the towns in Galilee where He had preached and worked miracles, but He was soon to have to do this, as we shall see, even before His Ministry in Judæa was entirely completed.

St. Luke tells us that He closed this charge to the Seventy-two with a few words of encouragement, assuring them that those who heard or who despised them, heard and despised Himself and His Father. 'He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.' The former part of the sentence asserts the indivisible union between our Lord and His messengers, and in this sense the words are rightly applied, not only to the Seventy-two or to the Apostles, but to all those who legitimately speak in the name of the Church and in union with her supreme authority. Thus these words are the charter, so to say, of all the legitimate envoys of the Church in the preaching of the Gospel. They are also a promise of special assistance and protection to all such, engaging our Lord's Providence

for their close and tender guidance, as well as for their defence against enemies and for the chastisement of such as oppose them or reject them. The second clause of the sentence, in which the mention of the Father Who sent our Lord is added, is in keeping with the grave and severe tone of the words immediately preceding, and pledges the Providence of the Father to the public and signal chastisement of those who despise the teaching of the Church.

He does not speak now of kindness and hospitality, the doing good to the messengers of the Church, on the one hand, and the injuring them, rejecting them, persecuting them, on the other. He speaks simply of hearing, or listening to them, and of 'despising' them on the other. The word which is translated 'despises' in this place, is the word which might properly be translated 'makes nothing of,' 'sets at nought.' It does not imply absolute and positive insult, but the denial of all reverence and attention to what is presented in the name of God. It expresses much the same with another word which is used when Herod is said to have despised our Lord, and when the Evangelist goes on to add that he 'mocked' Him.[2] For all experience teaches us that, between the two classes of men who listen diligently and reverently to the Word of God, and who mock at it and even assail and injure its preachers, there is a third, almost always far larger than either, a class of men who pay no attention to it. This is the common attitude of men towards the moral and spiritual teaching of the Church, or, again, towards her claims on their allegiance when they are already Christians, belonging to communities outside the Catholic unity. Their indifference to the claims of truth which it is

[2] St. Luke xxiii. 11.

inconvenient to them to examine may be veiled to themselves, by the excuse of good works on which they may be engaged, or service which they may seem to themselves to be rendering to God where they are. But it will never be known, until the Day of Judgment, how many there have been among men, often conspicuous for learning, or for many virtues, or for great personal influence, who will yet have to answer for having been 'despisers' of God, because they have paid no attention to the witness and the claims of His Church.

We may gather from the character of this charge to the Seventy-two disciples, that their mission was so far similar to that of the Apostles at an earlier stage of the history, that it involved what we commonly understand by the preaching of the Gospel, the setting forth of the ordinary and fundamental truths of which such preaching usually consists, as well as the special announcement that the Kingdom of God was at hand. It was not, therefore, merely an announcement that our Lord Himself was coming to preach. It was a part, so to say, of His own preaching. At the same time it could not have lasted long in any one place. Its object was to begin, at least, the evangelization of the country on a large scale, that our Lord might be able to pass rapidly from one spot to another, His time being so short. As in the case of the preaching of the Apostle, to which reference has been made, we have no account at all of the details of this mission of the Seventy-two. St. Luke only tells us that 'the Seventy-two returned with joy, saying, Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy Name.' The power to cast out devils is not mentioned as having been specially conferred on them before their mission

begun, but it was probably one which they might use ordinarily as disciples of our Lord. Perhaps the joy of these preachers was increased by their finding themselves able to exercise this power with success, remembering the time when the nine Apostles, who had been left behind by our Lord when He had gone up into the mountain of the Transfiguration, were unable to cast the devil out of the lunatic boy. They naturally measured the success of their mission by the ease with which they had exercised authority over the evil spirits. Our Lord in His answer seems to remind them that this power might have been given them for the authentication of their mission, without any corresponding increase of sanctifying grace in themselves, that is, that it did not exceed the blessing of the graces that are called theologically *gratiæ gratis datæ*.

'And He said to them, I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.' There are various interpretations of the words in which our Lord speaks of having seen the fall of Satan from Heaven. These words may be understood either of the present time, as if He had meant to say that He had seen Satan falling from Heaven at the time of the preaching of the Seventy-two. Or they may be taken to refer to the fall of Satan from Heaven after his rebellion, as if He had meant to remind them that the devils themselves had fallen, even from Heaven, that is, from a greater elevation and a more sublime power than that which had now been committed to them. In this case the words would be understood as conveying a covert warning against presumption on account of the pos-

session of any such gifts as those which the Seventy-two had been exercising. Or it may be understood that our Lord speaks of the fall of Satan from Heaven, in the first instance, as the beginning and foundation of the power which the Seventy-two had received. He had been cast out from Heaven, utterly and completely routed, defeated, conquered, and reduced to abject subjection, though he was not annihilated, nor even deprived of his natural powers of harming and destroying the works and creatures of God. He was cast out of Heaven, and his powers were left him as they might be left to a vassal who had been reduced to slavery, but who was allowed a certain amount of miserable liberty as a servant or executioner in the kingdom of his sovereign. He was allowed to work mischief to a certain extent, for the probation and perfection of the true children of the Kingdom, who were to inherit the thrones which he and his evil associates had forfeited. But the exercise of this liberty was but a temporary permission, liable to be curtailed or withdrawn entirely when it should so seem good to God.

In the Providential dealings of God, the time had come when some of His servants were to be allowed an unusually large amount of power over these hosts of evil. Thus then it had come about that during their late mission the Seventy-two had found the devils also subject to them in the Name of our Lord. It was fitting that such authority should be intrusted, in such cases, to those who had to announce the advent of the Kingdom. And, after all, such authority was but a sequel of that first victory which St. Michael and his faithful brethren had won, in the strength of God, at the time when the rebellion of Satan was defeated. For any great occasion of

the preaching of the Gospel, under our Lord's mission and authority, is naturally accompanied by a large effusion of grace, both on those who are the ministers of our Lord at such a time, and on those who are the hearers and recipients of the Word. And such an effusion of grace would naturally be accompanied by power over the spiritual enemies of man, who would certainly be stung to greater efforts and malice by the diffusion of the light and grace of the Gospel. Thus what had happened may have been a surprise to the Seventy-two, first that they had found themselves opposed, thwarted, confronted, hindered, in many unexpected ways, by the evil spirits, and then that they had found themselves emboldened to use authority with them in the Name of our Lord, and that they had been successful in such use. This our Lord may have meant to explain by the reference to the first great humiliation and defeat of Satan and his adherents, and then by adding that He had Himself armed His messengers with the powers of which He speaks figuratively, as the treading on serpents and scorpions, the brood of him who had originally triumphed over man in the form of a serpent, and also with the security against any harm for themselves.

This interpretation will become more intelligible if we connect it with the commentary of some Catholic writers, who insist especially on the image used by our Lord in speaking of the fall of Satan. He says, 'I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven.' These commentators understand the comparison of the lightning to answer, not so much to the fall of Satan, as if that had been very sudden and instantaneous, as to the spirit and intention of the utmost malignity with which Satan fell from Heaven. That

is, Satan fell from his former seat of bliss and glory, full of hatred to God and His creatures, hatred which he resolved to wreak upon His creatures, because in that way only could he injure God. Our Lord thus speaks of the entrance of Satan into the lower world, in which, as has been said, he is allowed, for God's good purposes, to exercise to a certain extent his powers of mischief and destruction, as the descent of some terrible body of lightning which blasts and kills and wrecks whatever comes across its path. Seeing all the malignity of purpose with which the evil one had set himself to ruin the good work which the Seventy-two had in hand, our Lord, as He tells them, had given them power over all the enemies who were marshalled by Satan against them—a two-fold power, of trampling them under foot, and of remaining themselves invulnerable. As it was inevitable that the malice of Hell would be provoked by the work committed them, so it was a part of that jealous watchfulness of His own over His messengers to endow them, for the sake of their office, with these two-fold power, as of both sword and shield. The subjection of the evil spirits to them had been the effect of this carefulness of His.

The words which follow seem to be naturally interpreted in harmony with what has been already said. 'But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice in this, that your names are written in Heaven.' The difficulty about these words lies chiefly in the interpretation which is assigned to the last clause, 'names written in Heaven.' The Scriptural expression which comes most near to this is that of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians, where he sends a request to his 'sincere com-

panion,' apparently some one in authority at Philippi, 'to help those women who have laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement and the rest of my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.'[3] The expression there used is one which occurs many times in the Apocalypse, the 'book of life,' the 'book of life of the Lamb.' It is a book out of which names may be blotted out after they have been written in it, and it is the book by which the dead, 'great and small, are to be judged,'[4] and those who are not written in it are to be thrown into the lake of fire.

This cannot, therefore, be a book in which the names of living persons, whose probation is not yet over, are so written that their final perseverance is infallibly secured to them thereby. And we can hardly understand our Lord to speak as if He meant that the whole number of the Seventy-two were to be certain of their eternal glory, although it is not inconsistent with His ineffable goodness to have resolved to assist them in such a way as to make that glory easy to them, nor with His ineffable wisdom to have seen then and there that so it would be. In the passage which has been quoted from St. Paul, that Apostle is speaking of persons who had taken part in the labours of his apostolate, as the Seventy-two had been taking a part in the labours of our Lord's preaching. It may be that our Lord meant to tell them that this was a higher work and one which in its degree went far more near towards securing them Heaven, than the exercise of the power over the evil spirits of which we have been speaking. For the work of the salvation of souls is recorded in Heaven, for the delight of the

[3] Philipp. iv. 3. [4] Apoc. xx. 10, 15.

angels and saints, and certainly also for the honour and blessing of those who carry it on. It is the most meritorious work that man can engage in, the work which associates him most perfectly to our Blessed Lord Himself. To have been allowed to employ themselves in this work was a more secure and a more legitimate source of joy than to have been intrusted with powers which contributed to that work only in an indirect manner, and without adding anything necessarily to the merits of those who exercised such powers, while at the same time they might be exposed to many temptations of pride and vanity thereby. The merit of the work lay in the work itself, not in its success, and would be the same in the registers of Heaven whether it were successful or unsuccessful. Thus the names of many apostolical labourers may be continually 'written in Heaven,' while to the outward eye they seem to be labouring in vain, failing in their preaching, reaping but a scanty harvest of souls, increasing but in a very moderate measure the numbers of the faithful, leaving nothing behind them by which men will remember their names. But their work is reckoned to them in the book of God at the very time that men are mocking at their failure.

'In that same hour, He rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said, I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight.' We need not linger over the question which is founded on the fact that our Lord is reported by St. Matthew to have used these same words of loving thanksgiving on an earlier occasion, when He had a reason for such thanks-

giving similar to that which He had at the time of the return of the Seventy-two. It was after He had received the messengers of St. John, had given them their answer, had borne witness to the greatness of His Precursor, had complained of the treatment which He and St. John had met with at the hands of the men of that generation, of whom He used the similitude of 'the children in the market-place,'—to which He added the first recorded denunciation of Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum,—that He had poured forth the affections of His Sacred Heart in the words which are almost repeated here, although the whole passage is not identical with this.

On that former occasion all that had lately passed had brought before our Lord's mind the Providence of the Father in hiding the truths of the Kingdom, as far as He could be said to hide them, from those classes who might have been supposed to have been most likely to receive them, and in revealing them, on the other hand, to those who appeared to have the least capacity for their reception. The thanksgiving was perfectly in its place, and it seems that our Lord desired not only to pour out His Heart to His Father, but that His words should be heard by His disciples and recorded by the Evangelist. On the present occasion, the circumstances had been precisely the same. Once more, in a most signal manner, the truths of the Gospel teaching had been pressed by our Lord on the people assembled at the feast of Tabernacles. They had been, to some extent, at least, accepted by the people, but they had been rejected, even with insult and outrage, by those who were in the place of Moses, the teachers of the people, the expounders of the Law of God. It would be absurd to see any difficulty in the fact

that this fresh instance of the Providential choice of God, rejecting the one class and admitting the other, should call forth, on this occasion also, the loving gratitude of our Lord, and that this should have been expressed in words, and in words to some extent identical with those used at the earlier time. Our Lord's words were always most perfectly suited to the occasion, and when the occasion was identical it cannot be wonderful that the words were identical also, as far as the circumstances permitted.

The only difficulty that can be raised must be based on the fact that St. Matthew speaks of the words as used at one time, and St. Luke speaks of them as used at another. But this difficulty has really no more reason in it than if it were made an objection to the historical fact that a public thanksgiving was made in the reign of some sovereign for the successful issue of a war, that the same sort of thanksgiving, on a similar occasion, was mentioned elsewhere as having been made at another time by the same sovereign. And every student of the Gospels ought to know that it is the peculiar method of St. Luke, when he has to record an incident in our Lord's Life which shows to a certain extent His character or mind, to choose an occasion different from that which the previous Evangelists have spoken of for the same purpose. Thus St. Luke is doing in this place what it is his constant practice to do, so far, at least, as relates to the repetition of the thanksgiving of our Lord, which had been already once related by St. Matthew. But, in truth, he has something to add, peculiar to this later occasion. For St. Luke has here to add the beautiful words about the blessedness of those who heard and saw what the disciples were then hearing and seeing,

which the saints of the older Dispensation had longed for, without witnessing.

These words also were spoken by our Lord on a former occasion, as St. Matthew tells us,[5] some time before the mission of the Apostles, and much more, therefore, before that of the Seventy-two. They could only apply, on that former occasion, to the preaching and miracles of our Lord Himself. But now they were spoken, as St. Luke informs us, after the return of the Seventy-two, and therefore in connection with the mighty effects of their preaching as the delegates and messengers of our Lord. It is, therefore, a trait of His infinite condescension, and of His tender care to encourage those to whom He had intrusted the preaching of His Kingdom, to put their work, as it were, on a level with His own in this respect also. He had already said, 'He that heareth you, heareth Me,' and now He uses of what they had done this other language, telling the disciples in general that their eyes were blessed for the things which they witnessed, that they had seen the evangelical preaching, in which men like themselves were employed as the envoys and ministers of the Incarnate Son, and that this had been an object of desire to the prophets and kings of the elder Dispensation, who were, however, not placed by Providence in the times in which these wonderful things were wrought.

'All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father, and Who the Father is, but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal Him. And turning to His disciples, He said, Blessed are the eyes which see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many

[5] St. Matt. xiii. 16 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 54.

prophets and kings have desired to see the things which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which you hear, and have not heard them.' On the former occasion our Lord had finished His words of rejoicing and thanksgiving to the Father, and the declaration that all things were delivered to Him by the Father, and the rest, by the tender invitation to all those that laboured and were burthened to come to Him, and take His yoke on them, and find rest to their souls. On this occasion, at the very outset of His fresh course of preaching in a new part of the country, He was going in search of souls rather than waiting for them to come to Him, as the blessed Magdalene had come. It is therefore very natural that we should find Him now ending His words by a declaration of the immense blessings which His presence and teaching, whether in Person or through His messengers, conferred on those who witnessed them.

The words in which our Lord expresses His thankfulness to His Father for the hiding of the truths of His Kingdom from the wise and prudent, and for their revelation to little ones, have already been explained. We understand that our Lord did not rejoice that the saving truths of the Gospel were hidden from any class of persons, but that He rejoiced and gave thanks for the choice which God had made of the lowly and humble rather than of those who were conspicuous in the eyes of the world, and that it was a joy to Him to see any one of the great attributes of God manifested signally in His dealings with men, whether it were the attribute of justice or the attribute of mercy. And He adds, both here and in the former place, the considera-

tions of the will of God as freely choosing those who were chosen, as the foundation of His own joy and thankfulness.

The words which follow, 'All things are delivered to Me by My Father,' seem to refer principally to the power given to Him as the Incarnate Son, for the purpose of the redemption of the world, the revelation of God, the foundation of His Kingdom, and the like. And we may consider that the sentence which follows, in which He declares that no one knoweth Who the Son is but the Father, and, as it is implied, to whom the Father will reveal Him, refers to that manifestation of Himself to souls by means of the Father's Providential teaching, of which He declared the faith of St. Peter, on his confession, to be the fruit. And, on the other hand, the words in which He says that on one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal the Father, refer to that manifestation of His Father which was the fruit of His own intercourse with men, His example and teaching, direct or indirect, and which, since the Ascension, has been committed to the Church as her great work in the world. The Scribes and Pharisees had not laid themselves open to the teaching of the Father, they had turned a deaf ear to Him, and so they had not known Who the Son is in His Incarnation. They had not listened to the teaching of our Lord, nor accepted His claims, nor recognized in Him the Sent of the Father, and so they had not learnt anything of that wonderful revelation concerning Him and His dealings with His creatures, which it was the mission of the Son to make. But the poor and simple, the humble and unlearned, had understood both what the Father was teaching concerning our Lord, and what

our Lord in turn was revealing concerning His Father.

Thus, while the priests at Jerusalem were at this very time full of malice and hatred against our Lord, persecuting His followers, and plotting against His Person, that most blessed Kingdom which He came to found was rising in the eyes of Heaven, and those who witnessed the work which had been carried on in Galilee, and who were now to watch its further progress in Judæa, were enjoying the sights and hearing the things which had been dimly foretold to the prophets and kings of the earlier Dispensation, foretold so as to fill their souls with unutterable yearnings, which, in the good Providence of God, were not at that time to be satisfied. Blessed, indeed, the eyes which truly saw, and the ears which faithfully heard! And yet those wonders and beauties and mighty fruits of God's most merciful grace, were not more wonderful or more beautiful or more mighty than what it is now the portion of the children of His Church to enjoy. The Kingdom had grown indeed, with a growth like that of which our Lord speaks in the parable of the Mustard Seed, and its enemies, who had so lately been excommunicating His adherents and threatening His own life, must have been strangely startled when, so soon after His withdrawal from Jerusalem, they heard of its propagation in thirty or forty towns at once in their own immediate neighbourhood. But the Baptism with which our Lord was to be baptized had not yet been accomplished, and until that accomplishment came, how was He straitened! Yet the accomplishment was nigh at hand, and after that, He would draw all things to Himself. Not in Galilee or in Judæa only was the heavenly work to

be carried on. The word was to go forth into all the earth, and the words of the preachers unto the ends of the whole world.[6] Then at last would the Kingdom be seen in its true proportions and majesty, and the most glorious dreams of the kings and the prophets would be fulfilled in the eyes and ears of all the children of Catholic Unity all over the earth.

[6] Rom. x. 18.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Good Samaritan.

St. Luke x. 25—37 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 100.

ST. LUKE passes on at once from the passage on which we have been commenting to a series of anecdotes and instructions, between which there does not appear to be any certain connection with regard to time or place. It seems obviously to be the aim of the Evangelist to give us in this series a collection of teachings of our Lord. belonging all to this period of His preaching, and all generally connected with Judæa as their scene. But he does not think it necessary to trace our Lord's footsteps from place to place, with the same exactness as we find in some parts of His Galilæan preaching. In all this part of St. Luke's Gospel there are but few notes of particular places, although it is indisputable, from the general colouring, so to speak, that the incidents must have occurred in Judæa. We have come to a part of the history of our Lord in which the narrative is far more concerned with what He taught than with what He did, and this remark applies even to His miracles, of which, as has already been said, we have but very few in this portion of the third Gospel. It is quite possible that St. Luke, according to his wont, follows accurately the course of time in every single particular in these chapters, but it does not seem all important to insist on this. We may safely assume

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that the whole of what is here related belongs to this period, when our Lord was preaching first in Judæa, and afterwards, for some time, in the region of Peræa. The first incident of this collection is certainly important enough to have been placed first, even if it did not precede the others in point of time.

'And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But He said to him, What is written in the Law? How readest thou? He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said to him, Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?' There are naturally various opinions about the intention and spirit of this lawyer or scribe. Some think that he asked the question in malice, in the hope of leading our Lord into some compromising statement, in the same spirit with the priests at Jerusalem, when they had brought to our Lord the woman taken in adultery. Others see in his conduct and in his language no reason for doubting that he asked the question in perfect good faith, like the young man a little later, who asked a very similar question. We must not let ourselves be led astray by the language of our version, and indeed of the Vulgate, in which the word which answers to 'tempting' seems to imply a bad intention. This Greek word, with its compounds, does not of necessity mean more than to 'make trial' of a person. Thus when our Lord asked St. Philip the question about the procuring of bread for the five thousand, St. John says that He did it for the purpose of

'proving' Philip, for our Lord Himself knew what He would do. There could have been no malice in our Lord's question, yet the Greek verb in that place is the verb of which one of the compounds is used in this place for the question of the lawyer. Some questions may be asked for the simple purpose of information, others for the purpose of entangling the person who is interrogated, others for the purpose of leading him into a contradiction, and exposing his ignorance, and others for the object of eliciting from him a declaration on some point which is at the time a subject of controversy and dispute. It appears that in the time of our Lord there was a common controversy as to the class of commandments in the Law which were to be considered the greater, a controversy which some schools settled in favour of the ritual and ceremonial part of the Law, while others maintained the supremacy of the moral precepts. This seems to have been the reason for the question afterwards asked of our Lord on an occasion which is sometimes confounded with this, when He was asked what or of what kind was the greatest commandment. But we do not seem now to have to do here with a moot question of this kind. There is no reason, unless it be conveyed in the use of the word tempting, of which we have already spoken, for supposing that the question of this lawyer was asked maliciously. Our Lord does not treat the questioner as He sometimes treated those whom He wished to baffle, and the answer given by the lawyer in his turn was perfectly sound, and was praised as such by our Lord. There may be a difficulty raised as to the second statement made by St. Luke concerning him, namely, that he asked the second question, for the sake of which and of our Lord's answer thereto

it is probable that the whole incident is related here, 'being willing to justify himself.' But with regard to this expression of St. Luke we may speak presently.

The answer given by the lawyer is taken from two passages in the Pentateuch, and it shows his intelligence and study of the sacred writings that he should have combined them. The first part of the answer is found in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength.' The rest is found in the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus: 'Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself.' In the original Hebrew, the word which we read as 'friend,' following the Vulgate, is translated by the Septuagint writers by the Greek word which means 'neighbour.' There is thus no difference between the texts, except that in the passage before us the description of the manner of loving God which is enjoined is fourfold and not threefold, the word which is represented to us by the word 'mind' being left out. The answer shows that this Scribe was on the side of those who settled the question between the moral and ceremonial parts of the Law in the Christian way. He had the texts ready to his mouth, and we may suppose that the real difficulty which pressed him was the question which he goes on to ask, as to the extent of the commandment concerning his neighbour. For this reason we shall defer the explanation of the fourfold division of the love of God until it occurs more directly towards the very end of the public teaching of our Lord, where it is related by St. Matthew and St. Mark, St. Luke omitting it because he has already mentioned the question as raised in this place. Here it may be enough to say that the love of God with the whole

heart must mean the direction of the whole will with perfect singleness of aim to God, as the one supreme end of life; the love of God with the mind must signify the subjection of the whole range of the intellectual powers and faculties to Him as the supreme truth; the love of the soul should be understood as the service of Him by all the parts and operations of the soul as distinguished from the spirit, which embraces therefore the regulation of all the sensitive and natural powers in His service; while the love of God with the whole might or strength must represent the use of all the powers of soul and body alike, of which operations the whole of our external life is composed. Having said thus much, we may add that the precept of this perfect love of God can be adequately and perfectly fulfilled only in the case of the blessed in Heaven, when the final glorification of the body shall have completed the adoption, as the Apostle speaks, of the children of God. For there alone will this positive precept be fulfilled in all the extent of which it is capable. Nevertheless, it can be fulfilled and has been fulfilled by the saints on earth and in this state of pilgrimage, in that there has been in them no positive violation of the precepts by the use of the faculties of heart and will and affections and intelligence, or memory, or intention, or of the bodily powers and members, which has been directly contrary to the love of God, although there may have been some deficiencies and shortcomings from all that might have been done for the love of God.

Our Lord answered the lawyer with loving courtesy and encouragement, 'Thou hast answered well, this do and thou shalt live.' He must have been speaking of the eternal life concerning which the lawyer had

put his question. And then the inquirer came to what, as has been said, was probably the real question in his mind, his conscience perhaps troubling him with doubts as to the limitation of neighbourly love which was commonly taught, or at least practised, by the Jews. 'But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?' His desire to justify himself does not in any case imply that he wished in any bad sense to ensnare or tempt our Lord. It can only mean either that he felt in himself some self-reproach for not following out this commandment in its fulness, or that he wished to learn of our Lord the way in which he might make himself more perfect in justice by its observance. For the word to 'justify' has this sense naturally, and does not only mean to make out a person as innocent against some charge explicit or implied, but also to make him just by an increase of inherent virtue, such as might be gained by any one who learnt from our Lord's teaching some more lofty path of justice.

The parable in which our Lord has conveyed His answer to the question of the lawyer, is one of those in which He has chosen, by a marvellous contrivance of Divine wisdom, to instruct us at once as to our simple practical conduct and at the same time, to set forth, for the benefit of the Church in all ages, the deep theological grounds on which the virtue which He is enforcing is based as its foundation. There is no particular in the parable in which we may not find this sublime theological teaching, while, at the same time, the narrative is so simple and touching that its practical import can escape no one. Thus we find that there is scarcely one of all our Lord's parables that is better known, and, to a

certain extent, as to its direct teaching, more easily understood than this. At the same time, we also find that when the theologians of the Church seek to apply passages and words of Scripture or of our Lord's teaching as recorded therein, to the illustration of such theological truths as the effect of the Fall on man and the remedy applied to those efforts by our Lord in His Incarnation and Passion, they can find few passages in which these truths are more accurately and fully illustrated than that which is now before us.

'And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half-dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion, and going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day, he took out two pence, and gave to the host and said, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these men, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers? But he said, He that showed mercy unto him. And Jesus said to him, Go, and do thou in like manner.'

The picture which our Lord here sets before us, like the rest of those which are contained in the parables of this last period of His teaching, is taken as to its whole scenery and all its incidents from

the part of the Holy Land in which He was now teaching. Between Jericho and Jerusalem lay a long desert, gradually sinking from the Holy City itself till it reached the level of the Jordan banks near which Jericho was built, which lay about six hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and therefore a good deal more below the position of Jerusalem. Although the country immediately about Jericho was rich and luxuriant in its fertility, the road towards Jerusalem soon came to pass through a wild and desert tract, which was well known as the haunt of robbers, and the scene of many murders. The traveller, therefore, who was robbed, stripped, wounded, and left half-dead by the way-side, was no figure which those acquainted with the district could find any difficulty in imagining. It is probably that cases of the kind here described were constantly occurring. The primary object of the banditti was to secure the property of the travellers whom they waylaid, but resistance naturally led to a struggle, in which they would not scruple even to take life, whether for the sake of possessing themselves of their booty, or of ridding themselves of the chance of pursuit and punishment. In this case they robbed their victim, took away even his clothes, and left him grievously wounded to die.

The next feature of the narrative is the treatment which he received at the hands of the priest and the Levite. Our Lord probably did not mean us to understand that the priests and Levites, as a class, were less inclined to mercy and compassion for their 'neighbours' than others. He may have meant to turn the attention of the 'lawyer' to the hard doctrines which prevailed among the class to which

he himself belonged, who might easily have found reasons for releasing men from natural obligations, as we know that they did in the case of the duties of children to parents by means of their doctrine concerning 'Corban.' The priest and the Levite might find grounds for their negligence, in the absence of any positive written obligation of putting themselves to serious inconvenience, and even to possible danger, by the exercise of charity towards the dying traveller. They might not be certain that he was one of the chosen people, they might be engaged on some mission which was connected with their sacred office, they might say that they were unable to spare either the time or the money which the care of the wounded man would involve. They had their own journey to accomplish in safety, they were not in their own homes and so bound by the laws of hospitality. When we consider the circumstances of opposition and persecution from, at least, the chiefs of the ecclesiastical class at this time, it seems not impossible that our Lord may have meant to add this line, representing their hardness and unmercifulness, to the many others in which He had drawn their picture for the instruction of His disciples. In any case, the priest and the Levite must have been among those to whom the rest of the people would naturally look for instruction and example as to the question which this lawyer had proposed. It is clear that if their teaching was to be gathered from their conduct, the poor half-dead victim of the robbers was not a 'neighbour' of theirs in any sense which brought them under the commandment which enjoined on them to love him as themselves.

Our Lord draws a complete contrast to their

conduct, and to their doctrine as exhibited in their conduct, in the picture of the Samaritan traveller. When we say that He draws the contrast Himself, we must qualify what is thus said by reminding ourselves, that here, as in the case of several other descriptions which occur in His parables, He may be relating actual facts, of which His Divine insight into men's hearts and His perfect knowledge of all that passed in the world might give Him the cognizance. Thus what He tells us about the unjust steward, or the unjust judge, or the rich man and Lazarus, or the Pharisee and the publican, may be founded on actual occurrences, and in the present case, the priest, and the Levite and the Samaritan need not be simply creations of the imagination. But putting this aside, as there may have been a Divine reason for the mention of the priest and the Levite, so also our Lord may have had a special purpose in the introduction of the Samaritan as the person, who, in the words of the lawyer, showed 'mercy' to the poor sufferer by the way-side. The Samaritan, according to the common Jewish doctrine, could not have been a 'neighbour' to the sufferer —supposing him to have been a Jew—and the sufferer would not therefore have had a right to his assistance according to that interpretation of the Law of which there was now question. The priest and the Levite would have had an obligation over and above that which might be incumbent on Jews in general, because they were ministers of God and, in some degree, pastors of the people. The Samaritan would have had an exemption from the obligation, over and above any that others might claim on the grounds already mentioned, because he was himself outside the Law, and would not have been

treated by the Jews as included in the rights which it conferred any more than in the obligations which it imposed. If he was bound at all, as he undoubtedly, in the mind of our Lord, was bound, it was by a more universal meaning of the Law than that which the Jews recognized, the meaning which recognized the universal brotherhood of men as the children of the one God and the descendants of one common human father. If his heart was moved by compassion which the others had not felt, it was the product of the law of nature, of which the Mosaic Law had been the republication and more formal promulgation, by which its principles were not so much introduced into the world, as insisted on and sanctioned anew. It had been given to the whole race of Adam from the beginning, and was thus binding on all the race, whether included in the special vocation of the chosen people, or left outside that special vocation. Thus his conduct in itself, if it was prompted by anything more solid than the simple tender feeling of sympathy for suffering, was as evidence of what St. Paul calls the law written in the heart, which speaks by the voice of conscience, and enjoins actions which are based on the great original principles of human morality, principles sometimes forgotten by those who live by a strict external rule, without the interior principle of devotion or charity or duty. For the exact observance of formal exterior religion, which took up so much of the time and attention of the priests and Levites, may often be consistent with great hardness of heart, unless accompanied and kindled into life by the interior spirit.

The actions which were prompted, in the case of the Samaritan, by this interior law, are minutely

described by our Lord, as if to show more completely the contrast on which He insists. 'Seeing him, he was moved with compassion,' although the Levite had and the priest both had seen him, and passed him by. 'And going up to him,' leaving the road in order to assist him, 'he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine,' which it seems were often used in this way in the East. He is described as if he had with him all the appliances that could be needed, as if to show the greatness of the diligence with which he relieved him. 'And setting him on his own beast,' which he must therefore have given up to him, 'brought him to an inn, and took care of him.' He therefore stopped on his own journey for the sake of devoting himself to the care of this stranger. But this was not enough for his charity. He stayed with him the remainder of the day, and 'the next day, he took out two pence,' two pieces of money sufficient for the probable expenses of his cure, 'and gave to the host, and said, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee.' The charity was therefore perfect in kind and degree, including personal service and labour and expense as well as simple compassion, and also the tender provision for future needs which might arise after the Samaritan himself had been obliged to proceed on his way.

Some difficulty has been raised in consequence of the form of our Lord's answer, in which He appears not so much to meet the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' as to correct the spirit in which the question itself may have been put, by the example of the Samaritan, who did not ask himself whether the sufferer lying before him was a 'neighbour' or

not, whether he were or were not of his own race, and the like, but showed that he considered him as having a claim on his compassion and service by the mere title of his suffering, or at least of his being a man like himself. Perhaps the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' implied a narrow and exclusive view of the relationship spoken of, at least wherever there was occasion for active exertion and labour in behalf of those in whom that relationship existed. Perhaps there were questions of this kind agitated in the schools of the Scribes, as there could hardly fail to be as to a matter of so much practical importance, and perhaps this lawyer was in the habit of hearing distinctions made in answer to such questions which did not quite satisfy his conscience. In such a case our Lord might well give a reply which struck at the spirit in which such distinctions may too often have been made.

On the other hand it must be remembered that our Lord does not seem to hint at this inversion of the question of the lawyer, when He says simply, after putting forward the narrative of the parable, 'Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?' And perhaps it is unnecessary to insist on the difficulty which has thus been raised. For the relation of neighbour, like that of brother, is essentially a double one. We are neighbours to those who are neighbours to us. If the Samaritan was neighbour to the wounded man, the wounded man was neighbour to the Samaritan. What our Lord's words imply is the question, Which of the three acted as a neighbour to the man who had fallen among robbers, and thereby showed that he understood his own relation to him and the obligations which it involved? And in this question the

true answer to the question of the lawyer is involved. The priest and the Levite were not neighbours to the sufferer, therefore in their judgment he had no claim on them by the title of neighbourhood, or if he had, that claim was superseded by the circumstances of the case, whether as regarded him or as regarded themselves. For some reason or other, he was not their neighbour in the sense of the precept that they were to love their neighbour as themselves. They may have drawn the line so to exclude all whom they did not know to be Jews, or they may have drawn the line so as to excuse themselves under certain particular circumstances, as they did with regard to the natural and Divine law of honouring parents in the case of the Corban. The Samaritan's interpretation of the precept did not admit of any such distinctions. The man by the wayside was his neighbour, even though he may not have been of the same race. And even though he himself might have had many reasons for pleading that, under the circumstances, he was not bound to stop and recognize the claim, at least not to recognize it at such a cost, by showing mercy to him the Samaritan showed himself a true neighbour, and at the same time proved that the man on whom he showed mercy was his neighbour in the true sense of the commandment of the Law.

There was the common nature and origin which made them brothers, for they were both children of the Heavenly Father and of one human ancestor. The needs and sufferings of the one called on the resources and powers of the other, and these were the measure by which the active love enjoined by the commandment was to be limited, or rather let loose without restraint. The Samaritan loved his neigh-

bour as himself, because he measured his service and help simply by the requirements of the sufferer and by his own powers of relieving them. The Son of Sirach says that God in the beginning 'gave to every man charge concerning his neighbour,'[1] and it was this original commandment, founded on the truth, that, as St. Paul says, 'God made of one all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth,'[2] which was the foundation and principle of the conduct of the Samaritan.

In this way, therefore, as we see, the question of the lawyer as to the true basis of the claim of neighbourhood was answered, and nothing more was required to guide his conduct aright than this simple principle loyally and lovingly applied. When our Lord set before the lawyer the whole of the treatment of the wounded man by the Samaritan, in all its details, it is clear that every word which He said found an echo in the heart of His hearer. It may have been an unusual thing for charity to be so tender and manifold and thoughtful in its manifestations, but the charity of the Samaritan did not go beyond the instincts of all who felt themselves God's children, placed by Him in the society which He had created, and their membership of which involved the duty of brotherly love. In this sense we find St. John speaking of this duty as an old commandment, for, as he says, they 'had it from the beginning.'[3] It was, in fact, the commandment which was renewed by Moses, when he bade the people love their neighbours as themselves. But, at the same time, we find our Lord calling it a 'new commandment,'[4] and speaking of it as His own

[1] Ecclus. xvii. 12.
[2] Acts xvii. 26.
[3] 1 St. John ii. 7.
[4] St. John xiii. 34.

commandment, because He gave it the motive of His own most perfect example, and by means of the Incarnation supplied a new foundation for its obligation, as well as fresh impulses and aids of grace to enable us to fulfil it properly. And, at the moment at which He made His answer to the inquiry of the lawyer, He could not but have had in His mind what He was about to do in this respect.

This consideration may serve to throw a new light on the picture which our Lord has here drawn of the charitable action of the Samaritan. The original of the picture is our Lord's own compassion upon us in becoming Man for our sakes, and in doing for us all that He has done in the dispensation of the Incarnation. He is Himself the Good Samaritan. But it is here as elsewhere, when our Lord speaks of His own love and condescension to us. That is, He hints at what He has done, rather than describes it. He gives a few features, but He leaves the most touching and tender of all the manifestations of His charity to be drawn out by others rather than by Himself. So it is when He draws the picture of the Good Shepherd, or of the Father of the Prodigal, or of the Householder, or of the Lord rewarding his servants for their faithfulness. His own language is inadequate as a representation of the truth, as if He chose always to leave much unsaid about His own goodness. Thus we find it to be in the picture of the Samaritan. He is a 'certain Samaritan on His journey.' They had but lately at Jerusalem called Him a Samaritan as a title of reproach, and He had not answered the charge. Now He takes on Himself the name of the outcast nation. He is on His journey, but He does not tell us that He became a Man for our sakes, that His journey is from no less

a place than Heaven, that He is sent by His Father into the world to redeem it by His Blood, and that the end of His journey is His return to Heaven after having opened its gates to us by His death. This is but the first of a series of reticences. For the description of the traveller who was in so evil a case is a very faint account of the state of man, who had fallen into the hands of his spiritual enemies fiends whose malice and hateful power so far exceed any human malignity, who have brought about his Fall, wounding him grievously even in his natural powers, and tearing away from him all the rich gifts of grace and knowledge with which his nature had been enriched by the pure bounty of God, Who had created him in great beauty and power, and then had added the preternatural treasury of graces which he had received in the state of original justice in Paradise. The description in the parable leaves all this to the Christian imagination.

The Samaritan comes to this poor sufferer, as it were, by accident, but in truth our Lord set out on His journey for no other object than to save us. The journey of the Samaritan involved no loss or humiliation, whereas the Incarnation involved in our Lord the most stupendous condescension, the emptying of Himself, the making Himself nothing, and more than nothing, in the infinite abasement of the Passion to which it led. And the binding up the wounds, pouring in oil and wine, may be taken as representing the cleaning and healing effects of the graces administered in the Incarnation. But what wounds inflicted by robbers who leave a man half dead, can represent the foulness and misery of sin and its effects, or what cleansing and healing by the most effective resources of the physician can answer

adequately to the purifying and life-giving sacraments and the other means of grace in which the fruits of the Incarnation are stored us? It was no doubt an excess of charity in the Samaritan to give his own personal service in the case of the wounded man, to set him on his own beast, and conduct him to the inn. All these details are added in by our Lord for the purpose of hinting at the details of His own action towards us. But, after all, they supply hints which but very faintly represent the magnificent and intense charity to which they refer. The wine and oil cost the Samaritan little, but it is the lifeblood of our Lord that was required for our healing.

It would take many long considerations to draw out all the depth of meaning contained in the truth that it is our Lord Himself Who tends us in the dispensation of the Incarnation. Beside and beyond all that He alone could do in redeeming us, satisfying for us, purchasing us pardon and grace and the title to Heaven as the sons of God, there is His tender action in dealing with each individual soul one by one with a marvellous wisdom and love, which we shall never understand until all things are made known. There is His careful personal guidance in bringing home to us, one by one, the persons and the occasions and the opportunities and the means of good, the presence and action of which make up our spiritual history. The setting 'the wounded man on his own beast' represents very faintly indeed the sacrifice for and to us of Himself, His whole Human Nature, as the ransom of our captivity, the discharge of our debt, the support of our life, the purchase of our eternal bliss. The inn is not an inn, but a Home, the abode of God Himself, the Holy Catholic Church. He must

find some way of representing in the parable the truth that, in the Church, our Lord, for His own most loving purposes, chooses to guide us and tend us and feed us and guard us by means of others who represent Him, though He is Himself ever present in them, the life and strength and light of all their ministrations. And thus it is that He adds that beautiful incident of the charge which is given by the Samaritan to the host of the inn, who sets before us the whole hierarchy and army of persons and things, consecrated or not, to whose charge He commits us, or on whom He leaves us to lean, in order, among other reasons, to the cultivation of mutual love by means of mutual services received and paid, and in order also that there may be room for the exercise of virtue, the use of graces, the faithfulness in the discharge of the commandment concerning one another which characterizes this dispensation of His as well as all others, and also for that great joy and delight to Himself and to us which will have their place when He comes again to repay whatever has been done for His sake, and in the discharge of functions committed to us or others by Him. Thus the whole picture of the Samaritan's dealings is best accounted for, by considering that our Lord had before His mind His own action in relieving our miseries with all the tender and thoughtful charity which is displayed in the Kingdom of the Incarnation, at so great a cost to Himself, and with so many wonderful inventions of His wisdom, and that this was in His mind when He bade His questioner, 'Go, and do thou in like manner.'

CHAPTER XIX.

The Choice of Magdalene.

St. Luke x. 38—42 ; *Story of the Gospels*, § 101.

We have already spoken of the question which will constantly recur to the mind, at this part of our work, with regard to the many anecdotes and discourses of our Lord of which this part of St. Luke's Gospel is made up, and which seem to have but little connection one with another, whether we are to suppose that the Evangelist has in this part also of his work followed his usual rule of keeping to the order of time, or whether the arrangement of his materials has been regulated by some other principle. In answer to this question we can only say that an historian like St. Luke might be on principle very careful to preserve the order of time in all material points, without of necessity binding himself never to deviate from that order. If there were some sufficient reason for placing anecdotes or sayings of our Lord out of the order of time, for the sake of joining together different sayings which may have a relation to the same subject-matter, it would be natural for him to do this, as, indeed, we may fairly suppose St. Luke to have done with regard to the three answers of our Lord to those who volunteered to follow Him, or who made some petition for delay when they were asked to follow Him. We shall therefore deal with these sections of St. Luke which he clearly intends

to understand as relating to the interval between the feast of Tabernacles, of which we have lately spoken, and the time at which our Lord passed into Peræa, as they lie before us in the Gospel, without considering that we are bound to examine whether the Evangelist has arranged all that happened in this interval in the exact chronological order. Certainly, the incident of which we have last spoken, which led to the delivery of the story of the Good Samaritan, has a character and importance of its own which might have led St. Luke to place it at the head of his collection. But we cannot be certain that it is not so placed because such was its natural position, and the scenery of the parable, as has often been remarked, is exactly what it would have been if our Lord had delivered it in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

The next incident is one which might have taken place at any time during the few months or weeks of the preaching of our Lord in Judæa. It has all the appearance of being one of those anecdotes which were current among the Christians in Judæa, and which St. Luke may have met with during the long time which he spent there while St. Paul was a prisoner. Our Lord is spoken of as 'the Lord,' as is the case so frequently in this Gospel, especially in this part of it, and the other persons concerned in the narrative were well-known saints, characters familiar to all who knew our Lord and His history, and yet they are spoken of here as if the reader had never heard their names before. The story is in itself of the very simplest kind. But the words and action of our Lord contained a great and deep lesson, such a lesson as belonged naturally to this stage of His teaching. Thus the anecdote has become famous

in the Church, and its spiritual teaching has been caught up and applied in a manner which draws out its marvellous and pregnant fecundity.

'Now it came to pass as they went that He entered into a certain town,' which we have little difficulty in identifying with Bethany, although some writers would place it elsewhere. If it was Bethany, there would be no reason for the mention of the name, considering the circumstances under which St. Luke wrote, and thus the anecdote may have occurred very soon after the occasion on which the story of the Good Samaritan was told. At all events, the place was the home of Martha and Mary Magdalene, the well-known sisters of Lazarus. 'And a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.' It is probable that some at least of the Twelve, if not all, were with Him, and the company which was thus to be entertained was large enough to tax the resources of the willing and eager hostess. 'And she had a sister, called Mary, who sat also at the Lord's feet, and heard His Word. But Martha was busy about much serving,' that is, it would seem, she set to work all the loving energy of her active character, not simply to provide a plain meal for her guests, but to entertain our Lord and His Apostles in a manner, if not worthy of Him, at least answering to her joy and devotion and generosity. What could be too much for Him? And, if the visit was, as may have been the case, unexpected, our Lord arranging matters lovingly so as to give them a surprise, and at the same time, draw out thereby the points of character in the two sisters on which He intended to found a great lesson for the Church, there would be all the more reason for some little bustle and haste and a certain air of importance and responsi-

bility in Martha which went a little beyond the requirements of the occasion, and which jarred somewhat on the deep peace and calm reverence which usually hung about His movements and guided the behaviour of His companions.

'Martha was busy about much serving. And she stood and said: Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me!' It would seem that our Lord did not make any protest against the over-great trouble to which Martha put herself for the entertainment of Himself and His companions. He always acted with the most exquisite courtesy, and although there may have been some little imperfection in the bustling and excessive preparations of His hostess, He accepted them all without remark or reproof, as He so constantly allows His servants to have their own way in unimportant matters in His service, interpreting gently all their slight excesses or blunders, and rewarding them all in His own Heart, not according to the wisdom which they display, but according to the zeal and goodwill of persons who are doing what they think best for Him. But although He let Martha have her way, as it were, in spreading her board and preparing an over-sumptuous feast on an occasion which was so dear to her heart, He did not the less take care to occupy the time which these preparations consumed in His own divine way, speaking either to His Apostles, or to Mary herself as she sat at His feet, the words of heavenly truth and wisdom, feasting their souls on a far more magnificent and fruitful banquet than that which Martha was toiling to make ready. For our Lord knew the value of time, and on the present occasion He showed how what we call the 'odds and ends'

of time are never to be neglected, and of what great importance it is that they should be well employed. And so He went on conversing in His sweet and gracious way, seeming to take no heed of the labours and industry of Martha, and holding Mary and the others present, as it were, in the chains of His heavenly discourse, unable, while that flowed on, to disengage themselves, or even to wish for anything but that it might flow on for ever.

In this divine way did our Lord correct the over-balanced eagerness of Martha, who thought but little, perhaps, of the sweet and life-giving words which were falling from His lips while she was preparing the material and earthly banquet. All through the Gospel history there is no soul spoken of, after His Blessed Mother, who seems to have had so perfect an instinct as to what would please Him most as being in itself the best, as Mary Magdalene. It may have been many weeks since she had been near Him, and, in any case, her chosen place was at His feet, to which she had already been led, by that beautiful instinct of which we speak, to water with her tears and then wipe with the luxuriant hair which had been a snare to herself and others. Our Lord did not forbid her, when she took her place there, and as His conversation flowed on, whether addressed to her or to others, she sat on, listening and feeding her soul, forgetting, perhaps, Martha and her service altogether. Or if she did not forget them, she felt sure that when it was His will she should leave that blessed spot, He would either cease His discourse, or bid her give herself to a service which was better for the moment even than that. And so we may suppose that the incident would have ended, but that Martha's over-eagerness grew upon her to such

an extent, as to lead her to plead lovingly with our Lord that He would release her sister in order to render herself help.

'She stood, and said, Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me.' Martha had too much reverence for our Lord to speak to her sister in His presence in any upbraiding way. Her words show that she understood that Mary wa perfectly protected, so to say, and excused by the fact that our Lord went on conversing with her as a listener. It shows the freedom which He allowed to His Apostles and dear friends, that if she did not interrupt Him, at least she took an opportunity of a pause to speak uninvited. The Evangelist says that she stood, apparently pausing in her occupation in a marked way to attract attention, and the Greek word implies that she came and, as it were, stood over or behind her sister. She had said to herself, over and over again, that the Master would not allow Mary to remain idle while she herself was working. And now, when her patience was strained, she spoke freely, making a gentle and touching complaint that He was absorbing Mary's whole attention, while there was work to be done for which she was needed, and asked Him to tell her to come and help her. Perhaps Mary had wondered how her sister could attend to anything but the words of our Lord as long as He chose to speak, but, as was her way, she left it to Him to call Martha to His feet as well as herself She did not think of suggesting to Him to bid Martha leave the business she had on hand to others, for the sake of hearing His discourse.

It was always our Lord's way to defend those with whom fault was found. In this case the words

of Martha, if they implied blame at all, affected Him as well as her sister. She had asked Him, as it were, how it was that He did not think for her, take her part, provide her with help, while her sister was sitting inactive at His feet. The blame, as far as there was blame, fell principally on Him, and glanced off also on her sister. Our Lord did not defend Himself, but He graciously and sweetly rebuked Martha for her mistake. It was right that she should strain all her powers and resources to do honour to such a guest, and perhaps, in truth, the necessary preparations involved a great deal of activity. But after all, she could but do her best, and she was sure that whatever that was, would be accepted and lovingly rewarded by our Lord's grateful Heart. While she was serving, her heart should have been at His feet, and she should have recognized how far better it was to be fed by Him with the words of eternal life, than to feed Him and His friends with earthly food. 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Her words, however reverent, show some want of a perfect intelligence and estimate of the various kinds of good. They seemed to put the work on which she was herself occupied above that in which Mary was engaged. They seemed to ignore the pre-eminence of the food of the soul over that of the body, of direct union and converse with our Lord over activity in temporal and external matters, even for our Lord's service. She was thus the predecessor of thousands of fault-finders among Christians, who rate everything by external results, who think that those who spend their lives in holy retirement and the exercises of the interior life are of no service to the community which is

shielded and enriched with a thousand blessings by their prayers, who can understand that Sisters of Charity and religious devoted to the education of the poor or the service of hospitals may be tolerated, but who have no mercy for those whose days and nights are spent in adoration or in intercession.

'And the Lord answering said to her, Martha, Martha! thou art careful and art troubled about many things.' He put His finger, as it were, on the defect or the exaggeration, which warped her judgment and then led her to complain and criticize. It is not necessary to understand His words as referring to the many dishes or courses which she was preparing, although this interpretation need not be absolutely rejected as untenable. If Martha was troubled about the multifarious dishes which she wished to prepare, it was because her soul was not so perfectly balanced and anchored by that holy purity of intention and simplicity of purpose which reduce a thousand matters to unity, and enable it to pass without excitement or disturbance from one thing to another, preserving its peace and serenity in all. Thus a sudden call on her hospitality had disturbed her, a number of small matters presented them to her in confusion, and she lost herself in her eagerness to attend to all at once. It was a fault of character, one of those faults of which so many are utterly unconscious, and of which therefore they seldom think of correcting themselves, and she had let it make her break out into something like a complaint, however gently the complaint was expressed. And so our Lord took the occasion to correct her with great tenderness. He repeated her name twice, which in itself is a gentle rebuke and at the same time a mark of great affection. He told her she was

too much disturbed, she let herself be put out and upset by the multiplicity of the cares to which she gave herself too freely. Their multitude made her miss the right estimate of each, and she was exaggerating the calls of the occasion as to the entertainment she was preparing. This was certainly a venial fault, and one which would have been passed over in silence if it had not led her to complain. She might have laden the tables with dishes and fruits if she had done it in peace and joy, conscious that, as nothing was too much to be done for Him, so also the most abundant and choicest banquet that all the riches of the world could produce was not worthy of His notice.

'But one thing is necessary.' There is need but of one thing. Here again some writers consider that our Lord means to tell her that a single dish was enough for Him and for His Apostles, if they were present, nor is this interpretation to be rejected as impossible. But it is more likely that He spoke of spiritual needs, and meant to say that the grace and light which were imparted by the word of God were alone truly necessary, as He had said, in words already quoted, that the true food of man was the word which proceeded out of the mouth of God. This was what Mary had chosen, and we may suppose, therefore, that this was what our Lord meant. 'One thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part,' or portion, 'which shall not be taken away from her.' Here again the Greek word is one which is often used of a dish or a portion of food, and therefore there may have been an almost playful allusion to the multiplicity of the viands which Martha was busy upon. And what Mary has chosen so well, she shall not be deprived of.

Our Lord's words show us that it was by no negligence or idleness or forgetfulness that Mary had left her sister alone. Her conduct was the result of a deliberate and thoughtful choice, by which she had quietly balanced the alternatives before her, and made up her mind as to what was best. She had selected, chosen out of what was open to her, that which was the most useful to her soul, the most honourable and dutiful to our Lord, that which gave the greatest glory to God. Just so before she had chosen to go in to the banquet of the Pharisee, and there make a public profession of her penitence and her love for our Lord. Just so she had chosen to repair the neglect of His host, by washing His feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair. Just so she had chosen to remain silent under the scorn and criticism of the Pharisee and his guests, and to leave her cause to our Lord. Just so, after her full and perfect pardon, she had chosen to devote her wealth and her personal service to ministering to our Lord, and the Apostles, of her substance, following about, with other holy women, the little community which He had gathered round Him as He passed from place to place in His courses of preaching. The history has not named her since that time. But we know that she must have laboured and toiled and passed from place to place, and that the kind of work in which Martha was now so anxiously engaged was not strange to her. She had done it, perhaps, scores of times. But now she had been guided by the perfect instinct of her heart to something better—to sitting at His feet and listening to His words. He had ratified and sanctioned her choice by allowing her to remain, and when it was threatened with censure and interference, He spoke in her defence. 'Mary

hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.'

Our Lord's words concerning this blessed soul are thus seen to contain a double commendation, and to set her before us as an example, in a twofold light, of what was highly pleasing to Him. For we must distinguish between the habit of soul of choosing the best which is disclosed to us, and the particular choice made on this occasion by Mary in the exercise of this habit of choosing. It is the particular choice made by Mary which is dwelt on especially by that large class of writers, who, following some of the most famous Fathers, consider this anecdote to be a kind of parable in which is set forth the relative excellence of the life of contemplation on the one hand, and the life of active service and good works on the other. Mary sitting at the feet of our Lord, and drinking in His gracious words, leaving meanwhile the active service of the preparation of the external banquet to her sister, is the type of the contemplative soul, giving its whole attention to prayer, the exercise of interior virtues, and communion with God. Martha labouring with all her energy in the external service of our Lord, represents the soul devoted to external good works, of mercy, piety, religion, charity, the field for which is of limitless extent under our present condition, and for the sake of these, contenting itself with shorter prayers, less frequent presence before the altar, seeing our Lord in all the various objects on which, for His sake, its labours are so freely lavished, leaving Him, as it were, in the Tabernacle in order to find Him in the poor, the sick, the ignorant, the afflicted, whom He has put in His own place, with the promise that He will consider what is done for them is done to Himself.

Both these two sisters are very dear to our Lord, and both the lives which they represent give Him great delight and great glory. These two lives are sometimes entirely distinct, sometimes they are to a certain extent combined. The active life is nowhere safe without the interior spirit and a certain amount of religious retirement and peace, to preserve it from degenerating into empty external activity. The contemplative life cannot be without an immense fire of charity kindled in the soul by communion with our Lord, which lights up the zeal of the heart into a great flame of prayer and longing for the glory of God and the salvation and perfection of souls. Thus the hearts of many of the contemplative souls have been as great instruments in the promotion of God's glory by the advancement of the Church, the conversion of sinners, the spread of the knowledge of the faith among heathen nations, and the like, as the famous missionary saints themselves. The work of the Church is kept up by the prayers and merits and sufferings and labours of the votaries of each of these lives in their respective spheres, and our Lord alone knows what His Kingdom on earth owes to each.

As Martha stepped beyond the perfect path when she, to some extent, found fault with Mary, or with our Lord's indulgence towards Mary, so the children of the active life must not complain of the idleness of the contemplatives, nor must the contemplatives look down on the industry and toil of those who have that other vocation. It is our Lord's will to be served by both, and He does not call His active workers away from their activity, except occasionally, as He called His Apostles to 'come apart into a desert place and rest awhile,' nor does He, except on certain great emergencies,—as when the monks of the

desert left their caves and cells to contend for the orthodox faith in the Arian times,—send His contemplatives forth from their hallowed rest to mingle with the noise and dust and turmoil of the world. He distributes, as He wills, His gifts and His vocations, He does not give to all the same work, nor does He permit any interference of human prudence or worldly judgment, to mar the beautiful harmony and regulated variety of His whole system, which is as many-coloured and as multifarious in its splendours as the earth with its flowers and its fruits. Each is beautiful in its degree and kind, and the beauty of the whole is the issue of the combination and contrast of the parts.

The other great lesson which is here taught us by the example of Mary and by our Lord's words concerning that example, is that simple rule of Christian reason and prudence, in accordance with which the thoughtful soul is continually exercising its privilege and gift of choosing what is best. When this rule is simply stated, it seems as if no one could be thought to act reasonably, and in a manner becoming the dignity of a being endowed with freewill, who left any part of his conduct to chance, and much less, who allowed his choice to be guided by passion, or prejudice, or the low motives of worldly interest. And yet when we turn to the lives of the saints, we find that it is considered the most arduous height to which they can attain, when they have become so familiar with the use of choice directed always to what is the best as to be allowed without imprudence to make this practice the subject-matter of a special vow. Our Lord's words give an insight into the souls both of Martha and of Mary. Martha, disturbed and troubled by a multiplicity of calls and

cares, is by the very fact of her disturbance unable to guide her choice between what is natural, or good, or better, or best, and so she gives way to the imperfection of at least an ungracious and undiscerning complaint. Mary has from the first guided her choice with her habitual delicacy and precision of judgment, and so she earns from our Lord the most consoling defence and protection, as well as the further assurance that what she has chosen shall not be taken from her. And it may be considered as a special beauty about the incident in which this great lesson is conveyed to us, that the choice of Mary does not relate to the disposal of her whole life, as is the case, for instance, when what is called a vocation has to be ascertained, but simply to the employment of a certain short space of time, while the preparations were being made for the entertainment of guests who had taken her sister and herself by surprise.

These words characterize the whole life of this most glorious Saint, for we shall find them apply to her in what is yet to be told of her, as well as to what was past at the time of which we speak. We shall see her choices in the Supper at Bethany, in her place by the Cross, in her conduct at the Entombment, at, and after the Resurrection. All through she is set before us as an example of the habit of choosing the best in the daily incidents and surprises of life, rather than in matters of greater moment. For there will always be many who will settle these greater matters according to the rules of Christian and spiritual prudence, and who will yet not understand how exceedingly precious in the sight of our Lord is the habit of choosing on the same principle with regard even to occasions

that seem the most trivial. In every such choice there is a whole array of spiritual beauties, a whole treasury of lofty merits, the intelligence of which is one of the great foundations of the interior life. It was in a continual chain of choices of this kind that the life of the Blessed Mother of God herself was spent. She did no actions that were splendid in themselves in the eyes of men, and yet her least and most ordinary actions were more perfect in the eyes of God than the adorations of the highest Seraphim. Her namesake and companion was, in the incident now before us, acting on the same principle and in the same manner which made the actions of that Blessed Mother herself so supremely pleasing to God. And the Church seems to acknowledge this truth, for she reads this Gospel on the crowning feast of all those which she keeps in honour of the Blessed Mother. She puts into the mouths of her priests and children again and again, as the praise which belongs to her whom they rejoice to follow to her throne itself in Heaven on the day of her glorious Assumption, these words first spoken of her namesake at Bethany, 'Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her for evermore.'

APPENDIX.

Harmony of the Gospels.

§ 82.—*The Prediction of the Passion and the teaching of the doctrine of the Cross.*

Matt. xvi. 21—28.	Mark viii. 31—39.	Luke ix. 21—27.
From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes, and chief-priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again.	And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients, and by the high-priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spoke the word openly.	But He strictly charging them commanded they should tell this to no man, saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and chief-priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day rise again.
And Peter taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying, Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee. Who turning said to Peter, Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.	And Peter taking Him, began to rebuke Him. Who turning about, and seeing His disciples, threatened Peter, saying, Go behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.	
Then Jesus said to His disciples, If any man will come	And calling the multitude together, with His disciples,	And He said to all, If any man will come after Me, let

Matt. xvi. 25—28.	Mark viii. 35—39.	Luke ix. 24—27.
after Me, let him deny himself, and take up His cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?	He said to them, If any Man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel, shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?	him deny himself, and take up His cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and cast away or suffer the loss of himself?
For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then will He render to every man according to his works.	For he that shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.	For he that shall be ashamed of Me, and of My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed, when He shall come in His glory, and that of His Father, and of the holy angels.
Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here, that shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.	And He said to them, Amen, I say to you, that there are some of them that stand here, who shall not taste death, till they see the Kingdom of God coming in power.	But I tell you of a truth, There are some standing here that shall not taste death, till they see the kingdom of God.

§ 83.—*The Transfiguration of our Lord.*

Matt. xvii. 1—13.	Mark ix. 1—12.	Luke ix. 28—36.
And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow.	And after six days, Jesus, taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them. And His garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.	And it came to pass about eight days after these words, that He took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray, and whilst He prayed, the shape of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and glittering.
And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias, talking with Him.	And there appeared to them Elias with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.	And behold two men were talking with Him. And they were Moses and Elias, appearing in majesty, and they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep. And waking, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.
And Peter answering said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here, if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.	And Peter answering, said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he	And it came to pass, that as they were departing from Him, Peter saith to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one

Matt. xvii. 5—10.	Mark ix. 6—10.	Luke ix. 34—36.
	knew not what he said, for they were struck with fear.	for Moses, and one for Elias, not knowing what he said.
And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them, Arise, and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes saw no one, but only Jesus.	And there was a cloud overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him. And immediately looking about, they saw no man any more, but Jesus only with them.	And as he spoke these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them, and they were afraid, when they entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him. And whilst the voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone.
And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.	And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead. And they kept the word to themselves, questioning together what that should mean, when He shall be risen from the dead.	And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of these things which they had seen.
And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then do the Scribes say that Elias must	And they asked Him, saying, Why then do the Pharisees and the Scribes say that	

Matt. xvii. 11—13.	Mark ix. 11, 12.	Luke.
come first? But He answering, said to them, Elias indeed shall come, and restore all things. But I say to you, that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they would. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them. Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them of John the Baptist.	Elias must come first? Who answering, said to them, Elias, when he shall come first, shall restore all things, and as it is written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things, and be despised. But I say to you, that Elias also is come (and they have done to him whatsoever they would), as it is written of him.	

§ 84.—*The Healing of the Boy out of whom the Apostles could not cast the devil.*

Matt. xvii. 14—22.	Mark ix. 13—31.	Luke ix. 37—45; John vii. 1.
	And coming to His disciples He saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes disputing with them. And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished and struck with fear, and running to Him they saluted Him. And He asked them, What do you question about among you?	And it came to pass the day following, when they came down from the mountain, there met Him a great multitude.
And when He was come to the	And one of the multitude answer-	And behold a man among the

Matt. xvii. 15, 16.	Mark ix. 17—21.	Luke ix. 39—42.
multitude, there came to Him a man falling down on his knees before Him, saying, Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic, and suffereth much, for he falleth often into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him.	ing, said, Master, I have brought my son to Thee, having a dumb spirit, who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away, and I spoke to Thy disciples to cast him out, and they were not able.	crowd cried out, saying, Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son, because he is my only one. And lo, a spirit seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him down and teareth him, so that he foameth, and bruising him, he hardly departeth from him. And I desired Thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.
Then Jesus answered and said, O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me.	Who answering them said, O unbelieving generation, how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto Me. And they brought him.	And Jesus answering said, O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring hither thy son.
	And when He had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him, and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming. And He asked his father, How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said, From his infancy. And often times hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But	And as he was coming to Him, the devil threw him down and tore him.

Matt. xvii. 17—19.	Mark ix. 22—28.	Luke ix. 43.
	if Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us. And Jesus saith to him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said, I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief.	
And Jesus rebuked him, and the devil went out of him, and the child was cured from that hour.	And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, He threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him, Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him, and enter not any more into him. And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said, He is dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose.	And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and cured the boy, and restored him to his father.
Then came the disciples to Jesus secretly, and said, Why could not we cast him out? Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief. For, amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mus-	And when He was come into the house, His disciples secretly asked Him, Why could not we cast him out? And He said to them, This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.	

Matt. xvii. 20—22.	Mark ix. 29—31.	Luke ix. 44, 45. John vii. 1.
tard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.		
And when they abode together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men. And they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again. And they were troubled exceedingly.	And departing from thence, they passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it. And He taught His disciples, and said to them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed, He shall rise again the third day. But they understood not the word, and they were afraid to ask Him.	And all were astonished at the mighty power of God. But while all wondered at all the things He did, He said to His disciples, Lay you up in your hearts these words, for it shall come to pass that the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this word, and it was hid from them, so that they perceived it not. And they were afraid to ask Him concerning this word.

John vii. 1.

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

§ 85.—*Jesus pays the coin of the tribute for Himself and Peter.*

Matt. xvii. 23—26.

And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas came to Peter, and said to him, Doth not your Master pay the didrachma? He said, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom

Matt. xvii. 25, 26.

do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers? And he said, Of strangers. Jesus said to him, Then the children are free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea, and cast in a hook, and that fish which shall first come up, take, and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater, take that, and give it to them for Me and thee.

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§ 86.—*Dispute among the Disciples. The evil of scandal.*

Mark ix. 32—49.

And they came to Capharnaum, and when they were in the house, He asked them, What did you treat of in the way? But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves, which of them should be greater.

And sitting down, He called the twelve, and saith to them, If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all, and the minister of all. And taking a child, He set him in the midst of them. Whom when He had embraced, He saith to them, Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in My name, receiveth Me. And whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me.

John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him. But Jesus said,

Luke ix. 46—50.

And there entered a thought into them, which of them should be greater.

But Jesus seeing the thoughts of their heart, took a child and set him by Him. And He said to them, Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me. For he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater.

And John answering, said, Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with

Mark ix. 38—49.

Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in My name, and can soon speak ill of Me. For he that is not against you, is for you. For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My name, because you belong to Christ, Amen, I say to you he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet to be cast into the Hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the Kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the Hell of fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt. Salt is good. But if the salt become unsavoury, wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you, and have peace among you.

Luke ix. 50.

us. And Jesus said to him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against you, is for you.

§ 87.—*Another account of the same discourse.*

Matt. xviii. 1—14.

At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven?

And Jesus calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said, Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven. And he that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire.

Matt. xviii. 10—15.

See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. What think you? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and goeth to seek that which is gone astray? And if it so be that he find it, Amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that, than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father, Who is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

§ 88.—*Fraternal correction and forgiveness.*

Matt. xviii. 15—35.

But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.

Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall

Matt. xviii. 19—26.

be loosed also in Heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in Heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

Then came Peter unto Him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Jesus saith to him, I say not to thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven times. Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him, that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that hé should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence, and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying, Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying,

Matt. xviii. 27—35.

Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came, and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

§ 89.—*Our Lord at Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles.*

John vii. 2—13.

Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. And His brethren said to Him, Pass from hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see Thy works which Thou dost. For there is no man that doth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world. For neither did His brethren believe in Him.

Then Jesus said to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you,

John vii. 8—13.

but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day, because My time is not accomplished.

When He had said these things, He Himself stayed in Galilee. But after His brethren were gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but, as it were, in secret. The Jews therefore sought Him on the festival day, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said, He is a good man. And others said, No, but He seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of Him, for fear of the Jews.

§ 90.—*Our Lord disputing in the Temple.*

John vii. 14—36.

Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the Temple, and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying, How doth this Man know letters, having never learned?

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him, He is true, and there

John vii. 20—30.

is no injustice in Him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why seek you to kill Me?

The multitude answered, and said, Thou hast a devil; who seeketh to kill Thee?

Jesus answered, and said to them, One work I have done, and you all wonder. Therefore Moses gave you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers), and on the sabbath-day you circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the sabbath-day, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry at Me because I have healed the whole man on the sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment.

Some therefore of Jerusalem said, Is not this He Whom they seek to kill? And behold He speaketh openly, and they say nothing to Him. Have the rulers known for a truth that this is the Christ? But we know this Man, whence He is, but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.

Jesus therefore cried out in the Temple, teaching and saying, You both know Me, and whence I am, and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me, is true, Whom you know not. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.

They sought therefore to apprehend Him, and no man

John vii. 31—36.

laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come. But of the people many believed in Him, and said, When the Christ cometh, shall He do more miracles than these which this man doth? The Pharisees heard the people murmuring these things concerning Him, and the rulers and Pharisees sent ministers to apprehend Him.

Jesus therefore said to them, Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me. You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me, and where I am, thither you cannot come.

The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is this saying that He hath said, You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me, and where I am, you cannot come?

§ 91.—*The Living Water of the Holy Spirit.*

John vii. 37—53; viii. 1.

And on the last and great day of the festivity, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture sayeth, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him, for as yet the Spirit was not

John vii. 40—53; viii. 1.

given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Of that multitude therefore, when they had heard these words of His, some said, This is the Prophet indeed. Others said, this is the Christ. But some said, Doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Doth not the Scripture say, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the town where David was? So there arose a dissension among the people because of Him. And some of them would have apprehended Him, but no man laid hands upon Him.

The ministers therefore came to the chief priests and the Pharisees. And they said to them, Why have you not brought Him? The ministers answered, Never did man speak like this man. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in Him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed. Nicodemus said to them, he that came to Him by night, who was one of them, Doth our law judge any man, unless it first hear him, and know what he doth? They answered and said to him, Art thou also a Galilæan? Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not. And every man returned to his own house. And Jesus went unto Mount Olivet.

§ 92.—*The Woman taken in Adultery.*

John viii. 2—11.

And early in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came to Him, and sitting down He taught them.

And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto Him a woman taken in adultery, and they set her in the midst. And said to Him, Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou? And this they said tempting Him, that they might accuse Him.

But Jesus bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground. When therefore they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said to them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again stooping down, He wrote on the ground.

But they hearing this, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest. And Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst.

Then Jesus, lifting up Himself, said to her, Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more.

§ 93.—*Our Lord the Light of the World.*

John viii. 12—20.

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The Pharisees therefore said to Him, Thou givest testimony of Thyself, Thy testimony is not true.

Jesus answered and said to them, Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go, but you know not whence I come, or whither I go. You judge according to the flesh, I judge not any man. And if I do judge, My judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. And in your law it is written, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that give testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent Me, giveth testimony of Me.

They said therefore to Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Neither Me do you know, nor My Father; if you did know Me, perhaps you would know My Father also.

These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, teaching in the Temple, and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.

§ 94.—*Our Lord the Son of the Eternal Father.*

John viii. 21—59.

Again therefore Jesus said to them, I go, and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sin. Whither I go, you cannot come.

The Jews therefore said, Will He kill Himself, because He said, Whither I go, you cannot come?

And He said to them, You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sin.

They said therefore to Him, Who art Thou?

Jesus said to them, The Beginning, Who also speak unto you. Many things I have to speak and to judge of you. But He that sent Me is true, and the things I have heard of Him, these same I speak in the world.

And they understood not that He spoke of God His Father.

Jesus therefore said to them, When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father hath taught Me, these things I speak. And He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him.

When He spoke these things, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to

John viii. 32—42.

those Jews who believed Him, If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered Him, We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man. How sayest Thou, You shall be free?

Jesus answered them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, that whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are the children of Abraham, but you seek to kill Me, because My word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father, and you do the things that you have seen with your father.

They answered and said to Him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus saith to them, If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man Who hath spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not. You do the works of your father.

They said therefore to Him, We are not born of fornication, we have one Father, even God.

Jesus therefore said to them, If God were your Father, you would indeed love Me. For

John viii. 43—53.

from God I proceeded, and came, for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not know My speech? Because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof. But if I say the truth, you believe Me not. Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.

The Jews therefore answered, and said to Him, Do not we say well, that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil, but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me. But I seek not My own glory, there is One that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you, If any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever.

The Jews therefore said, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and Thou sayest, If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost Thou make Thyself?

John viii. 54—59.

Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of Whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him, and do keep His word. Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day, he saw it, and was glad.

The Jews therefore said to Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said to them, Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, made, I am.

They took up stones therefore to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple.

§ 95.—*The Man born blind.*

John ix. 1—41.

And Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth, and His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in

John ix. 6—16.

the world, I am the light of the world. When He had said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, Sent.

He went therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. The neighbours therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. But others said, No, but he is like him. But he said, I am he. They said therefore to him, How were thy eyes opened? He answered, That Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him, Where is He? He saith, I know not.

They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath, when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This Man is not of God, Who keepeth not the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

John ix. 17—27.

They say therefore to the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said, He is a prophet. The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but how he now seeth, we know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself, he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed among themselves that if any man should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore did his parents say, He is of age, ask him.

They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He said therefore to them, If he be a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. They said then to him, What did He to thee? How did He open thy eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you have heard, why would you hear it again? will you also become His dis-

John ix. 28—40.

ciples? They reviled him therefore, and said, Be thou His disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as to this man, we know not from whence He is. The man answered, and said to them, Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this Man were of God, He could not do anything. They answered, and said to him, Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him, He said to him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God?

He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?

And Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.

And he said, I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored Him.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not, may see, and they who see, may become blind. And some of the Pharisees, who were

John ix. 41.

with Him, heard, and they said unto Him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you should not have sin, but now you say, We see, your sin remaineth.

§ 96.—*Our Lord the Shepherd of the Sheep.*

John x. 1—21.

Amen, amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he hath let out his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers.

This proverb Jesus spoke to them. But they understood not what He spoke to them.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers, and the sheep heard them not. I am the door. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but for to steal,

John x. 11—21.

and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.

I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth, and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep. And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.

A dissension rose again among the Jews for these words. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear you Him? Others said, These are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

§ 97.—*The Evangelical spirit.*

Luke ix. 51—62.

And it came to pass, when the days of His assumption were accomplished, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

And He sent messengers before His face, and going, they entered into a city of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. And they received Him not, because His face was of one going to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John had seen this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them? And turning, He rebuked them, saying, You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of God came not to destroy souls, but to save. And they went unto another town.

And it came to pass, as they walked in the way, that a certain man said to Him, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

But He said to another, Follow Me. And he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and to bury my father. And Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.

And another said, I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus

Luke ix. 62.

said to him, No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.

§ 98.—*The Mission of the Seventy-two.*

Luke x. 1—16.

And after these things the Lord appointed also other seventy-two, and He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come.

And He said to them, The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send labourere into His harvest. Go, behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him, but if not, it shall return to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house. And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth

Luke x. 11—16.

into the streets thereof, say, Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us, we wipe off against you. Yet know this, that the Kingdom of God is at hand. I say to you, it shall be more tolerable at that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Wo to thee, Corozain! wo to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to Hell.

He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.

§ 99.—*Our Lord rejoicing in spirit.*

Luke x. 17—24.

And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name.

And He said to them, I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you, but

Luke x. 21—24.

rejoice in this, that your names are written in Heaven.

In that same hour, He rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, and said, I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knoweth Who the Son is but the Father, and Who the Father is but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal Him. And turning to His disciples, He said, Blessed are the eyes which see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.

§ 100.—*The Parable of the Good Samaritan.*

Luke x. 25—37.

And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?

But He said to him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy

Luke x. 28—37.

mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

And He said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he willing to justify himself said to Jesus, and who is my neighbour?

And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced, that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?

But he said, He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him, Go, and do thou in like manner.

§ 101.—*The Best Part chosen by Mary.*

Luke x. 38—42.

Now it came to pass as they went, that He entered into a certain town, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard His word. But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said, Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things: But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

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